

UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

Christian Education: Exploring a New Perspective.

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Doctor of Philosophy

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for a postgraduate research degree of the University of Winchester.

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores a new perspective for Christian education. Written in the light of two contrasting paradigms within contemporary practice, the thesis philosophically critiques notions such as relation and learning, before proposing new ideas that pertain to learning as Spirit for an authentic and continued life of faith.

The Literature Review outlines the theological and philosophical inspirations for each paradigm. Critique highlights how scholars and practitioners posit paradigms against each other, resulting in dualism; the illusion of dualism is therefore considered, as is the inadequacy of any idea presented as 'in-itself.' Examples of how this dualism might be overcome are presented, before highlighting the need for a revised idea of relation.

In Chapter One, the role of the learner is considered. Heideggerian philosophy provides the framework for this consideration. Exploring Heidegger's concept of Being, it is identified how in this position, the learner and learning are one. The implication of this for Christian education is critically noted and the need for a new perspective is highlighted. Chapter Two considers further the idea of relation, and in the light of Hegelian philosophy, a dialectical relation of self and other is investigated. This is continued in Chapter Three, which in the light of three texts by Kierkegaard, begins to consider relation not only as either/or but as a broken triune shape.

Drawing on the idea of the triune shape, identified as the relation of relations, Chapters Four and Five explore further how the relations of the teacher and learner, as well as learning and the learner, might be revisited for authentic learning and faith. The notion of learning as a movement is also considered and critiqued. Furthermore, using Kierkegaardian literature to underpin the argument, the discussion considers the moment of breakthrough that establishes the triune shape, and highlights its significance for education.

The final two chapters explore two pedagogical movements: Bildung and Repetition. After exploring both these concepts, the thesis identifies how their relation might provide a new perspective for Christian education. Therefore, the concept 'Bildung as repetition' is proposed. In conclusion, the thesis identifies the Biblical Parable as an example of the breakthrough of the Absolute into the life of the learner, and suggests how 'Bildung as repetition' might contribute to authentic learning for a life of faith.

Keywords: Education, Spirituality, Philosophy, Relation, Bildung, Repetition.

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INTRODUCTION

The significance of this thesis lies in the proposal of a new perspective in Christian education. It is argued that this new perspective is faithful to both the Christian religious tradition and the personal spiritual life of learners, and thus contributes to the promotion of a meaningful and long-lasting life of faith. The thesis also considers how individuals learn and particularly in a religious context, it examines how a new educative movement of faith development might be considered authentic,¹ embracing learning as a spiritual task and allowing for a reimagining of truth. Therefore, it also provides new ideas for practice and it is briefly outlined how educators and learners might apply the concepts presented here.

The new perspective is explored in the light of a critical assessment of two existing positions of contemporary church-based Christian education. Having either an epistemological or ontological priority respectively,² these positions are seemingly contradictory yet both aspire to encourage a life of faith in learners, particularly children and young people.³ For the purpose of this thesis, these positions are considered as paradigms of Christian education, each paradigm constructed by the current author in order to identify distinctive ideas and methods as well models for practice. As each paradigm is critically assessed in turn and as philosophical inadequacies are highlighted, the discussion illuminates the need for new theory; thus, it sheds light on the inadequacies of the paradigms when prioritised in themselves and rather than creating a new paradigm, presents a perspective that re-imagines their relation, in relation to the Absolute. This introduction represents a personal reflection on how the thesis was inspired; it also outlines the purpose of the thesis for Christian education, and provides a rationale for its overall structure. At the outset, it is important to identify the nature of the paradigms to be explored and highlight how they came to be constructed as such.

¹In the context of this thesis, 'authentic' concerns education that has personal significance for the learner. In contrast to the voyeur who only looks upon learning, the authentic learner engages fully with the learning experience, often embracing ambiguities and contradictions, and lives it out accordingly (see pages 144-5).

²The priorities consider either the doctrine of the Christian religious tradition or the individual as the starting point for learning.

³ Whilst the context for the thesis is church-based Christian education undertaken with children, and the literature pertaining to the practice of such work predominantly considers learners to be children and young people, the overall discussion considers the learner as a single individual. He or she might be represented by a child or young person, but this is not exclusively so. Nevertheless, 'children' in the current context refers to those of U.K. Primary school age, that is between ages 5 and 11 and 'young people' those aged between 11 and 18.

As a philosophical practitioner ⁴ engaged in Christian work with children, it became increasingly apparent over several years, that two contrasting strands of thought regarding epistemology, ontology and pedagogy were evident within the theory that underpinned practice. Whilst having a common aim, that is to inspire and educate learners for an authentic life of faith, each seemed to negate the other. For example, within a Christian mission movement, the doctrinal priorities of repentance and conversion motivated educational methodology. However, this seemed to be at odds with suggestions emerging from conferences and publications concerning children's spirituality, that an ontological starting point for learning might provide a more authentic platform for Christian education. Furthermore, research data gained for a Master's degree dissertation suggested that repentance and conversion were not necessarily a requirement for an experience of, or relationship with God. Whilst each strand was located within a Christian framework, there seemed to be a disparity between the two.

Having identified the two contrasting strands through reflection on practice, it became necessary to investigate the theoretical influences on each. Further study highlighted two distinct routes. In terms of the first strand, a literature survey indicated John Calvin's notion of 'original sin' (1536/1986) as having significant influence: a precursor to this idea was found in the works of St. Augustine, most notably *Confessions of a Sinner* (Augustine, 397/2001) and *City of God* (426/1972). An engagement with the writings of these figures illuminated the suggestion that an act of confession was necessary for entry into a life of faith (Calvin, 1986: 236-42; Augustine, 2001: 62).

The second position, prioritising personal spirituality as the starting point for religious education, drew on the influence of Alister Hardy (1979), Martin Heidegger (1927/1962) and William James (1902/1982) in the Twentieth Century. Reflecting both the notion of apophatic

⁴ *This footnote is written in the first person.* For twelve years, I was a church-based practitioner with a Christian mission organisation. My work included engagement with both church and school-based religious education. At the same time, through reading the Doctoral thesis of a colleague, the notion of 'children's spirituality' was introduced to me. Developing an interest in this idea, I discovered a movement of Christian practitioners whose conference papers, journal articles and wider publications indicated that the spiritual life of children must be prioritised in educating for faith. My interest in this notion was received critically by some work colleagues. However, fellow delegates at conferences on children's spirituality were also critical of the ontological, epistemological and pedagogical perspectives of the organisation for whom I worked. It seemed that I had to make a choice; however, I was unable to do so, leading to a sense of tension and uncertainty regarding my position and how to continue in my practice. This led to an investigation into the background to each strand, which I subsequently identified as paradigms, as well as the consideration of their relation; this forms part of the purpose and outcome of this thesis.

spirituality, illuminated ideas within texts such as *The Cloud of Unknowing* first published in the late Fourteenth Century (anon, 2009), and the idea of God being present within all of life, promoted by Fourth Century Celt Pelagius (Newell, 1997: 10-15), this position also evidenced the rejection of knowledge and symbols in favour of a prior and often unexplained ontological connection with God. A template for access to a non - cognitive religious dimension of life was illuminated, thus raising critical questions regarding the first strand.

It also became possible to make connections between views on epistemology and ontology, and the specific pedagogical methods adopted in their light. For example, in the first strand, teaching about sin and salvation afforded learners the opportunity to repent and gain new life. In the second, everyday events were considered the inspiration for spiritual encounter, which purporting to bypass intellect, ontologically connected the learner with God. Therefore, the sense of awe inspired by the striking of a match (Hay and Nye, 2006: 72), was afforded as much spiritual value as an understanding of doctrine. As Rebecca Nye states, Christian education is about 'God's ways of being with children and children's ways of being with God' (Nye, 2009: 5).

Thus, having evidenced how theory robustly inspired methodology, each strand became identified as a paradigm.⁵ It is important to note again that the paradigms have been constructed for this thesis rather than having been already defined by others. Within each paradigm it is argued, is a distinct theological position, representing specific contents of belief, as well as distinct educational practices. Each are outlined more fully in the Literature Review.

Whilst the paradigms themselves are not considered problematic, it is suggested that the perceived uncritical adoption of ideas, models and methods within each paradigm on the part of a range of contemporary scholars and practitioners is problematic for authentic Christian education, as is the claim to the contents of each paradigm as 'truth.' This thesis argues then that there might be difficulty in placing oneself as a philosophical practitioner within one position or other; for authenticity, one must not be required to choose. Rather, one might seek to redefine the relation between paradigms for a new and dynamic learning experience and a re-imagining of what might be considered true.

⁵ The Augustinian route is identified as Paradigm One and the Heideggerian route is identified as Paradigm Two. The paradigms proposed here reflect my own interpretation of the way existing approaches and perspectives toward practice are viewed and therefore are only defined as such within the context of this piece of work.

It is therefore an exploration of relation that underpins the new theory presented. The inadequacy of the dualistic positing of paradigms is highlighted, as is the problematic idea that each might relate dialogically. Rather, a dialectical relation is proposed; this does not aim to unify positions, but serves to embrace the creative tension inspired by mediation and negation. It also concerns a re-negotiation of ideas. Christianity per se is then not rejected in this thesis; neither is the significance of its fundamental values and beliefs minimised. An ontological view of spirituality is similarly not ruled out. Nevertheless, the new perspective proposed here includes the idea that authentic learning might take place in the 'broken middle' (Rose, 1992: xii) between the two. In the 'broken middle' it is not possible to reside comfortably within one paradigm or other. Neither is it possible to negate the influence of each, or indeed to reconcile them as equals. There is no safe place to be, and no educational label with which to be identified. As such, it is suggested that a new perspective in Christian education might pertain more to the middle space than any position or paradigm.

As the proposed new perspective predominantly concerns learning for faith, the need for a philosophical enquiry into education, rather than theological evaluation, is identified. Furthermore, whilst the context for the thesis is church-based Christian education, a philosophy of education discourse that might be also transferrable to the classroom is presented. Thus, the thesis considers how individuals learn and proposes how a new pedagogical perspective might inspire authenticity in education that is both meaningful and transformative.

The new perspective also considers learning as a *spiritual* task that takes place in this middle space. It explores for example how individuals might learn for faith at the nexus of Christian teaching and their own contingent life, considering the importance of both the religious tradition and their own personal spirituality. Thus, the proposed new perspective also contains a new view of learning: that is, learning as Spirit. The notion of learning as Spirit is considered particularly by three significant Western philosophers: Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 – 1831), and Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). It is also noted at some length in the thesis how each philosopher considers or even re-imagines relation in education; thus, an exegesis of philosophical texts provides the platform from which new theory is developed. This examination of themes such as Being, relation and Spirit forms the first part of the thesis.

The philosophical inspiration for the new perspective, drawn from Hegel, proposes that the difficult relation of self and other is in fact the starting point for authentic learning. This

difficulty is addressed through the theory of the Unhappy Consciousness (Hegel, 1977: 131-138).⁶ From this philosophical premise it is made clear that the tension induced from an unresolved relation of self and other, indeed inspires a third way in learning that disallows any pre-determined outcomes. The misrecognition of the Unhappy Consciousness takes the educator and learner away from the security that comes with locating oneself within a certain paradigm and allows for an education of uncertainty.

This third way moreover is developed by Kierkegaard in terms of the educational movement of 'Repetition' (Kierkegaard, 2009). This is a movement that inspires an unequal triadic shape so to recognise the broken middle space. This third way is not a new paradigm itself, nor does it promote a new methodology. Rather, in transcending the dualism of the paradigms already identified, and disallowing any resolution regarding ideas or beliefs, it allows individuals to reflect on how learning for truth might become the truth of learning. The third way is also described by Nigel Tubbs as subjectivity's subjectivity (Tubbs, 2005: 221). In its relationship with the relation of paradigms, it allows individuals to gain a new perspective on how one might educate for a life of faith that is authentic to both the learner and the Christian context, inspiring life-long learning and continual spiritual growth.

Therefore, the current thesis argues for a new perspective and not a new paradigm. Drawing on the work of Gillian Rose in the text *Mourning becomes the Law*, it is argued that devising a new paradigm would only invite the tragedy that comes with establishing oppositions. Such oppositions are restrictive, teleological and inspire domination (Rose, 1996: 70-72). On the other hand, Rose suggests that the misrecognition of the Unhappy Consciousness might provide a template for an educational perspective that is never established as a totality (Rose, 1996: 72;75) The 'discordant outcome' (Rose, 1996: 72) of the representation and misrepresentation of the Unhappy Consciousness ensures that learning is always provisional. The struggle between two paradigms highlights the failure of self-recognition, out of which the new perspective, that considers education as a reflection on the struggle, emerges. This perspective invites the recognition of the space that is the 'broken middle' (Rose, 1992: xii; 1996: 75) and in this space, is Spirit (Rose, 1996: 75).⁷

The failure of self-recognition is inspired by an interruption. The new perspective thus argues for a new way of reflecting on education that allows teachers and learners to invite the interruption of any particular claims (be they theological or philosophical). It might be

⁶ The theory of the Unhappy Consciousness is explored in more detail in Chapter Two (see pages 84-6).

⁷ As will be highlighted later in the thesis, Spirit in the new perspective is the one who educates.

suggested that this perspective inspires a 'one degree shift' that unsettles teachers and learners, so that education becomes more about unknowing than knowing, and embraces misunderstanding rather than understanding.

Hence the structure of the thesis serves to interrupt the safety of the paradigms, as well as their theoretical positions. Outlining and critiquing both paradigms, as well as their dualistic relation, the Literature Review considers each to be in error when considered as complete in themselves. This establishes the need for a new perspective that considers their relationship in relation to the Absolute in a more dynamic way. Therefore, the Literature Review forms a discrete chapter. The philosophical discussion begins in Chapter One.

Chapter One involves further investigation into the ontological concepts and ideas of Paradigm Two that can be traced to Heideggerian thought, and as such provides a detailed account of Heidegger's philosophy of Being. Here the priority for learning lies with the individual who is his or her own potentiality-for-Being (Heidegger, 1962: 27). This as such eliminates the need for an external other. Chapter Two serves to interrupt this position. An overview of Hegel's theory of self and other as forms of consciousness reveals the folly of proposing any individual or entity as a totality (Hegel, 1977: 54) and through the illustration of a master and slave, leading to the proposition of the Unhappy Consciousness (Hegel, 1977: 131), it highlights the error of negating the 'other' in education (Hegel, 1977: 118). This chapter also serves to present the idea of the third dimension in learning and thus develops the notion of learning as Spirit.

Chapter Three takes the educational shape beyond the self and other relation. Again, disallowing totality and embracing the notion of learning as Spirit, an engagement with Kierkegaardian material identifies this third dimension of learning as the Absolute, who again interrupts. This idea of Absolute is not akin to the absolute knowledge that represents the conclusion to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit (Hegel, 1977:479); rather this Absolute ruptures self-sufficiency and self-knowledge. Chapter Three explores the self and other relation further, and proposes that authenticity in faith is gained when the individual makes the leap to the Absolute.

Chapter Three thus establishes the triune relational shape that is the relation of relations. This shape ensures that the 'broken middle,' which is inspired by the interruption of the Absolute, and is the space in which Spirit educates, is not between self and other, but beyond relation. Also drawing on Kierkegaardian material, Chapters Four and Five subsequently explore the

nature of this relational shape in terms of an individual's experience of faith. Chapter Six relates this relational shape to learning, considered in terms of the educational notion of *Bildung*. *Bildung* again re-imagines the relation of self and other. Presenting a philosophical appraisal of learning, the learner and the learning context, the discussion highlights how interplay between self and other, in relation with the absolute, might allow for imaginative and creative learning. Chapter Six also outlines Kierkegaard's movement of 'Repetition' and illustrates how learning involves not only the recollection of prior knowledge, but the re-imagining of truth for an authentic spiritual understanding.

Finally, in Chapter Seven, examining how the relation of 'Repetition' to the movement of *Bildung* might create a new perspective of learning, new theory for Christian education is presented. The proposed new perspective rests on the dialectical relation of Repetition with *Bildung*. Described as 'Bildung as repetition,' it highlights for learners, educators and policy makers, how the loss of the claim to epistemological or ontological priorities allows for freedom in learning and how the leap of faith to uncertainty, risk and danger, provides for the authenticity that each paradigm desires. It also highlights how the relation of self and other, when considered in relation to the Absolute inspires learners to make the 'one degree shift' away from self-sufficient belief, allowing them to reflect on the contents of faith in a new way. In the light of the new perspective then, both the tradition and beliefs of the Christian faith are re-appraised in the light of the contingent life of the learner, in relation to the Absolute.

This thesis does not propose a new position, model or methodology. However, it provides an encouragement to learners and practitioners to invite an interruption regarding any claim to positions, models and methods. It suggests that reflection on learning as Spirit might inspire the potentiality of the 'broken middle' in which new ideas, perceptions and even representations of faith might emerge, and as such provide the 'nudge' by which educators might understand how learning for truth is indeed the truth about learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

0.1 Background

Drawing on more than fifteen years of personal experience of activity within Christian education, it has been possible to highlight key beliefs within a variety of initiatives which in turn have inspired the development of a number of methods and models. Furthermore, a robust engagement with information made available through publications, conferences and web-based resources has illuminated these initiatives' theoretical influences and it seems that whilst there is common ground, the differences between them are significant. This chapter focuses on two contrasting sets of beliefs and methods from within the wider context of Christian education, and from which a philosophical appraisal of ideas prepares the ground for the proposal of a new pedagogical perspective.

In both expressions of teaching and learning, the aim of inspiring individuals to an authentic and continuing life of faith ¹¹ is the primary concern. For example, the aims of one para-church organisation are:

to make God's Good News known to children, young people and families, and to encourage people of all ages to meet God daily through the Bible and prayer so that they may come to personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, grow in Christian maturity, and become both committed church members and servants of a world in need (Hews, 2000: 169).

Another church-based movement states: 'facilitating children's growing fluency in religious understanding is seen as enriching the spiritual life they already enjoy' with worship, teaching, Bible reading and prayer being 'spiritually-focused' practices that aid individuals on their journey of faith (Nye, 2009: xiii).

Whilst one might identify a common aim, differences in the guiding beliefs of each are evident. The *a priori* nature of an individual's spiritual life highlighted in the second quote takes precedent over the 'Good News' (Hews, 2000: 169) that as in the first quote, must be made known. In the first example, a life of faith depends on repentance and trust in the risen Christ (Hews, 2000: 170), yet this notion is missing from the spiritually complete religious identity otherwise described. Writing in response to advocates of the first example, Rebecca Nye argues that a 'spirituality-neglecting mind-set can set up long-lasting misunderstandings

¹¹ Chapters Three and Five present an investigation into the notion of Faith; how this applies to the primary research question will be considered in Chapter Six.

about faith’ and that an idea of faith that is ‘mostly about having lots of efficiently categorised religious knowledge,’ is a ‘dangerous course to follow’ (Nye, 2009: 13).

It might be argued then that each example presented here represents a different priority for Christian education and therefore a different position. In particular, there appears to be a disparity of views regarding epistemology, pedagogy and the ontological spiritual status of the learner. Also, as evidenced by Nye’s statement above (Nye, 2009: 13), these views are often posited as opposites, thus evidencing a dichotomy. Whilst the advocates of a ‘spirituality’ led pedagogy negate a doctrinally based ethos, spiritual immediacy is negated by others. Proponents of this alternate position argue for example that an *a priori* religious spirituality is without theological grounding. This is reflected by Christian educationalist Andrew Wright who writes:

authentic faith is rooted not in self-reflection leading to an unmediated experience of a Unitarian God but in a relationship with the Trinitarian God dependent on the mediation of revelation through scripture and ecclesiastical tradition (Wright, 1998: 72).

It is the conjecture of this thesis then that an authentic expression of Christianity does not pertain to one or the other. Such a dichotomy is illusory and must be critiqued. To that end, the primary research question asks:

How can a new perspective of Christian education inspire learners to an authentic life of faith?

Following a critical exploration of theory relating to ontology, pedagogy and epistemology in each position, this chapter considers the problems of positing before critiquing two methods for handling such positings that are evident in practice today. A notion of relation that extends beyond the dichotomy is also highlighted and themes such as the relation of learning and the learner, the relation of learning and the teacher, and the roles of immediacy or objectivity in relation to truth, are all considered. As already noted, it is not the purpose of this thesis to criticise the content or values of Christianity. However, as ontology, pedagogy and epistemology form the basis of the overall argument, and throughout the wider thesis a philosophical exegesis of these themes provides a foundation for the development of further theory, their role in each expression of Christian education is explored.

It is suggested here that the positions introduced above represent two paradigms of learning. From this point, they will be referred to as Paradigm One and Paradigm Two respectively.¹²

¹² A range of methods, models and ideas are evident within Christian education; however, those presented here within two contrasting positions serve to illustrate the dichotomy that this thesis seeks

The principal perspectives of each paradigm will be explored in some detail, providing a platform for the philosophical examination of their key ideas in the chapters that follow as well as affording the inspiration for critique.

0.2 Overview of Paradigm One

Further to the aims of encouraging personal faith and Christian maturity on the part of its participants, one of the working principles of the organisation that represents Paradigm One states that it is 'committed to teaching Christian truths' to 'encourage children to follow Christ' (Hews, 2000: 127). Indeed, a recently published magazine encourages supporters and participants to pray that 'children will respond to what they hear' (Scripture Union, 2016: 9). This reflects an epistemological priority by which coming to faith¹³ pertains to what learners (or in this context children) hear and know. It also concerns their willingness and ability to make appropriate responses. In this paradigm, the Christian religious tradition provides the framework placed around the learner (Dallow, 2002: 80) and knowledge drawn from the tradition affords the theological impetus to inspire learners to commit personally to the Christian faith.

In this context, there is a claim to truth. Christian education here aims to encourage individuals to accept agreed truths in order to inform their choice to commit; therefore, learning involves a movement on the part of an individual towards agreement with these truths. These 'truths'¹⁴ have recently been summarised as 'The Four Points' and learners are encouraged to understand and accept the following claims in relation to their spiritual state: 'God loves me; I have sinned; Jesus died for me; I need to decide to live for God' (Griffiths, 2009: 146). 'The Four Points' have also been popularised as a sub-genre within churches and now, with a logo and visual symbols, they provide a straightforward means of understanding and articulating a certain theological stance.¹⁵

The ontological supposition here is of an *a priori* separation from God. The epistemological supposition is that individuals should accept and believe these theological points in order for the separation to be bridged. This bridging is traditionally known as 'conversion' and as

to address. The two paradigms to be presented here have therefore been identified for the purpose of this thesis. To that end they are identified as paradigms One and Two.

¹³ 'Coming to faith' is a term regularly utilised in the rhetoric of Paradigm One.

¹⁴ The use of inverted commas here serves to signify the provisional assessment of truth, as promoted later in the thesis by scholars in Paradigm Two. A more substantial exploration of 'truth' in relation to learning and the learner features in Chapter Five.

¹⁵ www.the4points.com accessed 23/03/2016

Francis Bridger writes: 'conversion is concerned with an event or moment in the life of an individual child, when he or she makes a decision to turn to Christ and to accept him' (Bridger, 2000: 139). He suggests that it is at this point that a child's relationship with God begins. In a book that outlines the history of the Sunday School movement, church leader Mark Griffiths outlines the significance of conversion to Christianity in this paradigm and argues that the emphasis on leading children towards a life of faith is placed on a rational and outwardly recognised decision (Griffiths, 2009: 145). He also points out that conversion concerns ontology as well as epistemology and he turns to the Augustinian theory of sin and salvation to illustrate his observations.

Griffiths notes that the influence of St. Augustine has extended across more than one and a half millennia and is still 'embedded within modern theology' (Griffiths, 2009: 148). Drawing on the New Testament verse in Romans 5:12,¹⁶ this theology states that sin, being passed down from Adam through all generations, is intrinsic to the human spiritual state and clouds man's¹⁷ ability to recognise God. This idea is commonly known as 'original sin' (Pridmore, 2009: 188). It is only through the grace of Christ as liberator from sin that the God-man relationship is restored (Newell, 1997: 381). Being inherited, the sinful nature is present in all peoples thus presenting the need for educational work that secures their salvation.

This theology might be described simply as a re-ordering. Nigel Tubbs identifies key themes in Augustine's doctrine such as opposition and error and describes how through re-ordering these are overcome. For example, sinful man is in error in opposition to a holy God (Tubbs, 2009: 45) and death is error in opposition to eternal life (Tubbs, 2009: 46). In the process leading to conversion, the realisation of error (sin) leads to confession and this error is overcome when the self is reunited with God (Tubbs, 2009: 48). As a result, the former sinner's spiritual life becomes real and meaningful whilst eternal salvation is also secured (Griffiths, 2009: 155). Therefore, in this paradigm learners are encouraged to live a life in relationship with God in the here and now but the ultimate telos is the life which goes beyond death. This re-ordering, the result of which is conversion to Christianity, is highlighted by Bridger in relation to the Greek origin of the word *epistrephe* and described as a turning

¹⁶'Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned...' (Romans 5 vs 12; New International Version).

¹⁷ The term 'man' is used here in relation to the rhetoric of Augustinian theology and does not represent any gender bias. A similar usage will also be evident in relation to philosophical texts where 'man' presents as a generic term that represents humankind.

around (Bridger, 2000: 154). As a result of confession and the overcoming of sin, a new life is gained and lived in union with Christ.¹⁸

This is illustrated by Griffiths who in one of his earlier books writes that in Christian work with children, 'giving them a clear opportunity to respond the gospel message is plainly one of the most important aspects of our work' (Griffiths, 2003: 51). This indicates that an authentic decision is reflected in a 'change of heart' (Griffiths, 2003: 51). He also continues to describe how children can come to know more 'about God' (Griffiths, 2003: 52). Griffiths outlines (with the aid of child-friendly illustrations) how humans are separated from God by sin until they accept his forgiveness, made readily available through the death and resurrection of Christ (Griffiths, 2003: 53). This again represents an ontology of separation and error, with the agreed truth claims providing the primary means of re-ordering one's spiritual life.

For others (for example, Lamont, 2007: 58; Herdman and Semans Smith, 2015: 51-4), the movement towards conversion is represented more by a linear trajectory¹⁹ than a re-ordering. This trajectory represents a process of faith development that engages learners as individuals and prepares them for the moment when the decision to accept the truth of Christianity is made. The linear movement is illustrated more fully by faith development theorist J. W. Westerhoff. Westerhoff's theory describes four sequential 'styles' of faith that lead one to the 'owned faith' that epitomises conversion. For Westerhoff, owned faith 'often appears as a great illumination or enlightenment but in any case, can be witnessed in our actions and new deeds' (Westerhoff, 1976: 98). Having a more personal starting point, learners themselves participate in the conversion process and the status of owned faith comes about as a result of immersion in the three previous styles.

In Westerhoff's theory, the foundational 'experienced faith' involves the learner witnessing and experiencing the life of faith through words and actions (Westerhoff, 1976: 91-3). This includes exploration, imagination, reaction and imitation. 'Experienced faith' expands to 'affiliative faith' which prioritises community and participation, including a sense of history and tradition. Westerhoff proposes that in this style 'religious affections' might be enhanced (Westerhoff, 1976: 94-5). The existential 'searching' phase that follows is 'the religion of the head' (Westerhoff, 1976: 96); this involves doubting and questioning but as Westerhoff suggests, this must be in place before learners can understand about faith for themselves

¹⁸ This is illustrated in the following Bible verse: 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here' (1 Corinthians 5 vs 17; New International Version).

¹⁹ The linear movement of faith is examined philosophically in Chapter Five.

(Westerhoff, 1976: 96). The final stage, 'owned faith,' which is reached after the expansion of the others, is a conversion. Conversion here involves a 'change in a person's feeling, thinking and willing – in short in their total behaviour' (Westerhoff, 1976: 98). Learners who own their faith put it into action and stand up for what they believe.

In Westerhoff's theory, learners experience a faith context, ask questions and take part in the wider experience of Christian community before making a decision. However, a decision must be made. This decision is cognitive and involves learners accepting agreed doctrine so that they might own their faith. It seems that albeit personally active in their own faith development, learners are ultimately only able to authentically live a life of faith when they have all the facts sorted out. This concerns learners expressing a personal faith within an epistemological framework, delivered externally and laden with significant assumptions.²⁰

The external delivery of objective ideas therefore highlights a pedagogical priority within Paradigm One. Griffiths places this paradigm within the 'Evangelical' tradition, the etymology of which suggests an announcing or proclamation of the 'Good News' that the self and God can be reunited. Reflecting his assertions presented above, this involves a sharing of the Christian story through presentational methods (e.g. preaching or teaching). Knowledge is transmitted and a response is made (Griffiths, 2009: 156). In many cases, entertaining styles of presentation (or proclamation) engage learners; practitioners utilise visual imagery such as drama, video and puppetry as well as high energy activity such as singing and interactive games in order to inspire effective participation in learning.²¹ The presentation of Christian beliefs and values is reinforced by practices such as Bible reading, prayer and worship. Small group discussions and a more recently produced online game²² are also promoted as a means of engaging with the message, as is an interactive website including Biblical passages with commentary, Christian music and a blog.²³ A training article featured in a resource magazine, highlights methods that educators might draw on in order to provide interesting teaching and learning experiences for all ages. For example, the *instructor* uses visual aids, slides or videos,

²⁰ As will be highlighted in due course, for some Christian scholars this is problematic. Truth here is presented from a position of objectivity; yet as will be examined in later chapters and particularly through the work of Kierkegaard, this position must be re-evaluated.

²¹ At this stage of the thesis it might be suggested that these methods are effective in so far as they engage learner's imaginations and allow for participation in what is being presented. Without any empirical data to support this suggestion, it might be argued that this is somewhat erroneous. However, the effectiveness of learning in terms of inspiring an authentic life of faith is questionable and this forms a part of the inspiration for the major research question.

²² www.guardiansofancora.com accessed 23/03/2016

²³ www.wordlive.org accessed 23/03/2016

conveys facts, gives interpretations and expands on contemporary meaning regarding Bible stories²⁴ (Wills, 2002: i). The *explorer* encourages discussion and allows learners to research the Bible for themselves, utilising creative methods such as role play, writing, making music and large-scale art work (Wills, 2002: iii). Meanwhile the *storyteller* presents the story in a fun way, engaging the learner's imaginations and helping them to apply it to their own lives (Wills, 2002: ii). Two further educational principles are deemed important in this paradigm: relationship building and role modelling. In the popular resource book *Going Bananas*, Sue Clutterham proposes that Christian educators adopt a three-fold strategy for faith development that includes 'proclaiming Christian truth, building quality relationships and embodying Christian lifestyle' (Clutterham, 1997: 10). It is proposed that each principle is regarded in equal measure and together they promote authentic learning.

To that end a number of residential activities²⁵ are often organised. These aim to provide a safe and creative setting in which adults might work alongside children so they might, as Donal Dorr suggests, 'find a deeper meaning in the bits and pieces of their everyday lives, and ensure that their activities are carried out in the presence of God' (Dorr, 2000: 98). Regular attendance and service at residential activities is encouraged; furthermore, training and mentoring are made available and a long-term commitment to groups and individuals remains a priority. Role modelling, positive relationships and the quality of care given to learners, as well as good quality creative activities, all serve to encourage individuals to embark on a life of faith whilst strengthening the faith of those who already believe.

In summary, it is suggested that in Paradigm One, a belief in the ontological separation of the individual from God is reflected in the epistemological priority of objective 'truth'; this highlights an initial separation of the learner from what is to be learnt. As written and spoken words are held in esteem and teaching involves the transmission of information, it might be argued that a learner's own Being²⁶ is largely ignored and that spiritual authority belongs to the teacher. In critiquing the guiding beliefs and practices of this paradigm, one might question whether they actually allow for an authentic mode of learning to take place and lead the questioner to consider the need for a more learner-centred approach.

²⁴ Such Bible stories might include the 'I am' sayings in the Gospel of John, or the Ten Commandments in Exodus.

²⁵ <http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/ScriptureUnionHolidays/AboutSUHolidays/64175.id> and <https://www.ventures.org.uk/> accessed 23/03/2016

²⁶ The capitalisation here reflects the Heideggerian presentation of the notion of Being. This is outlined more explicitly in Chapter One.

In the following section, certain aspects of these beliefs and practices are problematized. Whilst still locating the critique within the Christian spiritual tradition, the following views serve to review the ontological, epistemological and pedagogical perspectives of Paradigm One in order to pave the way for the introduction of new priorities. The critique therefore signposts Paradigm Two and provides a rationale for the inclusion of an alternate paradigm in this chapter.

0.3 Critique of Paradigm One

As already stated, it is not the intention of this thesis to critically assess Christianity per se. Nevertheless, two Christian thinkers, John Pridmore (2009) and Francis Bridger (2000), whilst locating their own theory and practice within Paradigm One, raise concerns with some of the perspectives presented above. The first pertains to ontology and the Augustinian notion of original sin.

Pridmore argues that the Western theological issue of original sin has done damage to the spiritual lives of many, including children (Pridmore, 2009: 187). He illuminates two images that he argues have influenced Christian attitudes towards children: that of a child who is 'lost' and the other of a guilty sinner convicted. He describes these images as shocking (Pridmore, 2009: 190). For Pridmore, a paradigm that is founded on the notion that children are lost before they are found as well as guilty therefore convicted (of sin) before they are saved, is a concern. He also considers the view that salvation involves a cognitive response to an understanding of the cosmic separation of humanity and God as erroneous (Pridmore, 2009: 190).

For Pridmore this view is at odds with his understanding of children's salvific status. His assertion is that 'salvation means wholeness' (Pridmore, 2009: 199). A child's relationship with God is already complete (Pridmore, 2009: 197). He argues that children are not 'saved' or 'unsaved' (Pridmore, 2009: 193). Rather, their Christian experience unfolds throughout the different moments of their life, each moment marking another milestone of salvation in a 'continuous now' (Pridmore, 2009: 197). Pridmore's ideas do not negate either the significance of sin or the need to nurture a relationship with God. However, his ontological priority reverses the notion of separation and the need to 'win children to Christ' (Pridmore, 2009:194), instead accepting 'salvation now' (Pridmore, 2009: 199).

Bridger also evaluates the significance of sin and asserts that the 'problem of sin and accountability' has 'preoccupied children's evangelists for so long' (Bridger, 2000: 117).

However, in considering the role of sin in an individual's coming to faith, he takes a psychological view. Whilst describing sin as an original human state (Bridger, 2000: 124), Bridger is less concerned about one's salvific status in relation to sin than its outworking in real life. He equates sin to self-centredness which has an impact on inter-personal relationships: it involves a lack of respect for others and their rights (Bridger, 2000: 125). He also suggests it might also imply a lack of respect for God, choosing one's own path in life and prioritising one's own 'route to personal advancement' (Bridger, 2000: 125). In response to this, he suggests that the capacity to understand self-centredness comes with maturity. The idea of overcoming separation cited above therefore also becomes erroneous since not all children have the means of understanding sin and making a considered cognitive response is not possible for everyone.

Furthermore, what might be commonly agreed sinful practice, when considered contextually might need to be reconsidered. For example, Bridger questions if a child from a low economic environment who steals food to survive, as such becomes a sinner (Bridger, 2000: 150). He outlines what he feels is the priority of Romans 5:12;²⁷ rather than emphasising the consequence of opposition and error, he highlights that the Epistle writer Paul understands a relationship with Christ as one of freedom (Bridger, 2000: 150). As a result, it deals with the person and not the sin.

In addition to ontology, problems concerning pedagogy in Paradigm One are highlighted. These include the concept of authority. Pridmore considers that a transmissional methodology, which he describes as an 'adult schemata of salvation,' reflects power and control (Pridmore, 2009: 193).²⁸ Here, those in leadership decide in advance the 'truths' to be learned. His reference to 'beach mission theology' in which the 'evangelist may well elicit from some young children the faith response deemed necessary' (Pridmore, 2009: 193-4), also reflects his notion that the authority in spiritual learning is commanded by (adult) teachers. In principle, the individual learns in response to the direct and indirect methods of communicating agreed truths. Although utilising more egalitarian and interactive methods of learning as described above, written and spoken words are held in esteem and a cognitive priority is in evidence.

²⁷ This is the Biblical text that is purported to introduce the idea of original sin, initially cited on page 8.

²⁸ The issue of power in education is addressed in Chapter Four.

This methodology is reflective of Paulo Freire's 'banking concept' of pedagogy, which is an example of mastery.²⁹ According to the way in which 'the teacher knows everything and the student knows nothing,' the learner is expected to passively adopt the truths that the teacher conveys (Freire, 1970: 54). Furthermore, 'the teacher thinks and the students are thought about.' As such: 'the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students' (Freire, 1970: 54). Therefore, the subjectivity of the individual learner is denied and what the teacher claims to be true, must also be deemed as true.

This idea is similarly problematized by Pridmore and Bridger. According to the former author, in this paradigm the authority for defining what truth is and what it means lies with the provider (Pridmore, 2009: 194). Bridger concurs and alluding to models such as 'The Four Points' (Griffiths, 2009: 146), he suggests that a seemingly formulaic approach to Christian teaching might be 'too simplistic.' Additionally, this approach evokes a response that is based on 'adult-decision making' (Bridger, 2000: 140) rather than the contingent experience and understanding of the learning individual.³⁰ The external application and subsequent acceptance of these doctrinal points is considered final yet without any reference to subjectivity.

It might be argued then that, without reference to the personal nature of the learning individual and indeed without providing space for the opportunity to debate or question the presentation of these points, authenticity within the learning process might potentially be minimised. In the light of the research question, it must also be questioned whether a paradigm with an epistemological priority can inspire spiritual learning. Furthermore, one even might consider whether the ethics of mastery are acceptable for a contemporary context

²⁹ It might be suggested that in this learning situation the teacher acts as a master. Tubbs explains that in a paradigm of mastery, the teacher knows on the student's behalf what must be learnt (Tubbs, 2005: 69). He or she therefore has authority and as such the epistemological upper hand.

³⁰ Personal contingency is a key theme in this thesis and will be considered variously in the following chapters.

(Theissen, 2011: 8) ³¹ and if in the era of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ³² the role of the Christian teacher as an adult authority figure is any longer credible.

At this point a similar outline of the principal perspectives in a second paradigm is presented. Again with critique, the issues raised pave the way for the consideration of a new perspective of Christian education.

0.4 Overview of Paradigm Two

In Paradigm Two, the idea of ‘children’s spirituality’ presents as the ontological starting point for Christian education.³³ This is evidenced in a number of publications that aim to support Christian educators in inspiring spiritual growth in children and young people (Ratcliffe, 2004; Yust, 2004; Copsey, 2005; Nye, 2009; Privett and Richards, 2009; Csinos, 2011; Beckwith and Csinos, 2013).

Rebecca Nye writes that ‘children’s spirituality is initially an innate capacity for the awareness of the sacred quality to life experiences’ and proposes that an encounter with ‘transcendence can happen in specific experiences or moments as well as through imaginative or reflective activity’ (Nye, 2009: 6). For American Christian educators Beckwith and Csinos, a spiritual consciousness as an inherent aspect of the human condition allows learners to gain a full awareness of their immediate connection with God ³⁴ and the world around (Beckwith and Csinos, 2013: 41), and rather than uncritically accepting objective knowledge, they posit that the individual can experience transcendence and the transcendent throughout the on-going processes of life (Beckwith and Csinos, 2013: 42). Reflecting Pridmore’s ontological priority,

³¹ In his book *The Ethics of Evangelism*, Thiessen considers whether it is morally right to engage in proselytising and investigates whether it is possible to distinguish between ethical and unethical methods (Theissen, 2011: 8). He does not consider a paradigm which includes epistemological certainty and adult authority as unethical; rather he cites agents of this paradigm as arrogant (Theissen, 2011: 59-62), against which he objects. His premise is that ethics includes conduct; therefore, an ethical approach should give consideration to dignity, coercion and tolerance (Theissen, 2011: 234-6).

³² Articles 12 to 14 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in particular make reference to the rights of children having their own views, including regarding religious beliefs, and their right to express these views.
http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publications/Child_friendly_CRC_summary_final.pdf accessed 23/03/2016

³³ In most publications within this discipline, ‘children’s spirituality’ serves as a generic term for the spirituality of young people from birth age to early adulthood. However, in the context of this thesis, it serves to represent the spiritual lives of learning individuals of any age.

³⁴ The term God is presented as such in the context of the texts cited. When it is denoted ‘God,’ the provisional nature of the term on the part of the author is assumed.

these ideas have clear implications for epistemology and pedagogy and will be explored in due course.

‘Children’s spirituality’ as a concept has gained popularity over the past twenty years. Whilst it has been suggested that to *define* spirituality is antithetical to its nature (Priestley, 2008),³⁵ it has been *described* in terms of expressions such as: ‘meaning and purpose, expressions of relatedness, transcendence, immanence, ultimate values, integrity, identity, a connection to something greater, and awareness’ (Hyde, 2008: 11). Since 1999, the *International Journal of Children’s Spirituality* has included a number of significant articles authored by educators, psychologists, health care practitioners and pastoral workers that draw attention to these principles. Furthermore, as ‘spiritual development’ is also highlighted in the revised guidelines for the leadership and inspection of schools (Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills, 2015: 36), there is evidence that the rhetoric of spirituality is prevalent within the mainstream as well as the church.

As an accepted aspect of humanity, ‘children’s spirituality’ is considered to be a universally innate phenomenon and human predisposition. With it is the *a priori* assumption of an ontological connectedness with others and God. From a Biblical starting point, one might make the claim that as Beings made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27),³⁶ all people have an *a priori* capacity to experience the transcendent in all aspects of life as well as in a life of faith; religion therefore is not the exclusive domain of spirituality nor are spirituality and religion inextricably linked (Hyde, 2008: 24).

This is underlined by the theology of Pelagius, a fourth century Celt who saw God as present within all of life. His belief that the goodness of God is within each human marked him out from St. Augustine whose theology emphasised the pervasiveness of wrongdoing in the world as well as the separation of the sacred from the natural (Newell, 1997: 14). Pelagius’ view that all of creation is connected allows one to consider both nature and scripture as means of revealing one’s relation with (rather than separation from) God. For Pelagius, the role of the church (or Christian educator) is to encourage individuals to explore what is already in their

³⁵ This idea is taken from Priestley, J., (2008), *A Brief Introduction to the Notion of the Spiritual*; it is published as a statement from the President of the International Association for Children’s Spirituality, posted on the website www.childre spirituality.org and accessed on 23/03/2016.

³⁶ ‘So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them’ (Genesis 1 vs 27; New International Version)

hearts (Newell, 1997: 10-11). Consequently, redemption is not an overcoming of separation but the releasing of 'what we essentially are' (Newell, 1997: 15).

This is given further attention by Urs von Balthasar who, in his text *Unless You Become Like This Child*, theologically explores the spiritual nature of a child. For von Balthasar, a child's spirituality is considered in relation to humanity's original pristine state. By linking Jesus' words 'whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter into it' to the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus concerning spiritual birth,³⁷ he interprets 'spiritual childhood' as an original dimension into which all humanity is born (von Balthasar, 1991: 16). Although they might move away from this original pristine state as life continues, children are also able to re-imagine this innate relationship with God through inductive acts of discovery and illumination (von Balthasar, 1991: 16). This also highlights a pedagogical template for the spiritual Christian educator.³⁸

According to Catholic theologian Karl Rahner, the natural spiritual life concerns immediacy³⁹ (Rahner, 1971: 37) and openness toward the divine (Rahner, 1971: 36). It is his conjecture that this relation is available to all persons and in Volume Eight of *Theological Investigations*, he specifically makes reference to children. He maintains that childhood represents a direct relationship with God (Rahner, 1971: 36) and that as full human beings, God is already present within each individual (Rahner, 1971: 38). Rather than their moving towards an appreciation and experience of the spiritual as they develop and grow (Rahner, 1971: 36), children's natural relation toward God continues to be a part of their lives as developing individuals. As such the life of each individual is 'related with absolute immediacy to God himself, to his original creative and inalienable design for him' (Rahner, 1971: 37). This concerns an understanding of existence.⁴⁰ Here the individual's *a priori* existence includes a relationship with God. Therefore, this existential spirituality is a gift: not something 'appended to' but that which is 'accepted and lived through freely' by all (Rahner, 1971: 35). To allow for this requires

³⁷ John 3 vs 1-16; New International Version.

³⁸ For educators such as Nye, Beckwith and Csinos, the role of the educator is to facilitate the ongoing relationship between the child and God, rather than establish a means of overcoming a relation of separation.

³⁹ Immediacy is a theme explored widely in this thesis, particularly in Chapter Two in the light of Hegelian philosophy.

⁴⁰ The notion of 'existence' is considered more fully in terms of Heideggerian philosophy in Chapter One and the Kierkegaardian idea of faith is explored in Chapter Five.

intentionality: an intentionality that allows childhood to remain open and for the child's natural spiritual state to bear upon life as a whole.⁴¹

However, Rahner also acknowledges that there is more to consider here than the child's natural state and his ideas provide signposts for themes to be explored in later chapters of this thesis. First, he notes that humanity lives in freedom. This freedom ensures that subjectivity plays a role in determining the present identity and meaning of the experiences of the individual. This sits in contrast to the idea within Paradigm One that a Christian identity is defined by acceptance of 'The Four Points.' In Paradigm Two, subjectivity is a primary concern, reflecting Rahner's assertion that 'what is already present in the child still has to be realised, to become actual in experience' (Rahner, 1971: 38-9). Here it is the subjective experience of the child that determines learning and meaning-making, not what is imposed.⁴²

A second theme is contingency. This reflects Rahner's view of original sin. He considers childhood in two senses: whilst the child's prior ontological state expresses an immediate relation with God, he or she is also born into a pre-existing context that is historically conditioned. No child will continue to develop spiritually in a pure state of existence, unaffected by the implications of the past or their current context. As such they will experience original sin – however the sin in this context is brought about not through humanity, but history.⁴³ For Rahner, contingency is mediated by the child. Being the example of God's grace that saves all mankind, the Christian sees nature and grace united in childhood (Rahner, 1971: 38). Whilst already exposed to the influence of the world, the Christian is also always living under grace so that whilst paradoxical, it is possible to be sinful yet redeemed.

The final theme is also a paradox. This paradox highlights the nature of an absolute God who is both mysterious and present (Rahner, 1971: 42) in relation to the life of the subjective individual. As Rahner considers the ineffability of the divine and the autonomy of the individual, he explores more fully what it might mean to be a child of God, not in ordinary

⁴¹ This reflects the words of Jesus: 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 18 vs 3; New International Version).

⁴² A philosophical appraisal of 'freedom' is presented in Chapter Three in the light of Hegel's Master and Slave analogy. Additionally, subjectivity is a key word for Kierkegaard and the educational implication of this is examined in Chapters Two and Three.

⁴³ The suggestion here is that whilst children are not born as sinful human beings, they are born into a sinful world. Initiation into this world will inevitably draw all people into sinful behaviour. However, it can be assumed that the accountability for sin cannot be taken by human beings whose age or cognitive stage of development disallows them from grasping the implications of this behaviour. Their status under grace secures their salvation.

terms but as a theological discourse (Rahner, 1971: 42-3). Although the current thesis gives only a little attention to theology, these themes are later explored philosophically through engagement with Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments* and *Stages on Life's Way*.

In the theological positions described here, there is no evidence of the overcoming of opposition. Rather, an innate and complete relationship between an individual and God is presented, albeit mediated by an historical context, on the basis of which he or she is able to develop in spiritual maturity. Consequently, it relates to Being and contains possibility and potentiality; as such it affords agency. Agency is another key theme in this Paradigm and is highlighted particularly for education by Australian scholar Brendan Hyde. As a pedagogical tool, agency sits in contrast to the practice of information transmission outlined above.

Hyde asserts that due to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, individuals are now in a position to shape their own learning more than ever before (Hyde, 2010: 93). He describes agency as 'the ability of children to understand their world and act upon it' and highlights how through engagement with the artefacts of their lives, learners are able to 'influence learning and construct meaning for themselves' within their own cultural contexts (Hyde, 2010: 94). This is reminiscent of Freire's praxis-based learning which involves reflection on the world and action in order to transform it (Freire, 1970: 106). For Hyde, this idea includes accepting children as human beings not human 'becomings' (Hyde, 2010: 93), able to influence their own learning and make meaning for themselves.

Agency has an ontological basis and this is reflected in the writings of Marian de Souza who suggests that it might 'enhance spiritual expression through intuitive, imaginative and creative responses that stem from deep within the individual' (de Souza, 2010: 35). Agency is also reflected by Adams, Hyde and Woolley who propose that this idea is effective in allowing learners to take risks, share their views and describe their experiences so to empower and raise self-esteem (Adams, Hyde and Woolley, 2008: 38-9). Their intention in education is to prioritise the voices of children that have in their view been 'silenced' by formal educational practices (Adams, Hyde and Woolley, 2008: 31), religious beliefs (Adams, Hyde and Woolley, 2008: 33) and cultural taboos (Adams, Hyde and Woolley, 2008: 34). They seek to reclaim the political nature of children's spirituality, allowing learners to be able to form their own views,

have a voice (Adams, Hyde and Woolley, 2008: 37) and take action for change (Adams, Hyde and Woolley, 2008: 107-9).⁴⁴

An understanding of the learner as an agent then scrutinises the viability of an approach that does not start with the child. As Nye points out, the challenge for Christian educators, particularly in the light of these ideas, is not to exert external influence but to learn about spirituality from individuals in their Being (Nye, 2009: 80). She claims that this alternate position challenges the 'old thinking' of the previous paradigm (Nye, 2009: 80). In Paradigm Two, adult authority in the presentation of Christianity does not claim exclusivity in determining the meaning and direction of a learner's spiritual life. Furthermore, as Pridmore argues, 'the child does not have to wait to be born again to be a child of God' (Pridmore, 2009: 194). Therefore, it could be claimed that fixed knowledge is not a pre-requisite for a relationship with God or indeed an authentic life of faith.

This has implications for epistemology. For educators in the field of children's spirituality, meaning and truth are not just objective perspectives but arise through the awareness of a 'new dimension of understanding, meaning and experience' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 109). This dimension is the child's own personal spiritual life. Affective knowledge gained from spiritual experience rather than cognition provides the foundation for learning. This pertains to the corporeal and expressive dimension of life described by Hay and Nye as the 'meta-cognition' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 109). Meaning-making then takes the form of both verbal and non-verbal articulations expressed by the learner who is the locus of subjective truth (Hay and Nye, 2006: 109).

Whilst the proposed audience of Nye's text *Children's Spirituality: what it is and why it matters* (2009) comprises church leaders and Christian children's workers within the Anglican church, her ideas regarding a new paradigm signal a departure from a model of Christian education that has a rigorous theological basis. Rather, Nye's approach places the external presentation of theological doctrine as the secondary element in nurturing faith. An historical foundation

⁴⁴ The political nature of children as agents is illustrated by Antony Swift in the book *Children for social change*. Here the author describes the activities of liberation undertaken by children and early adolescents in a Brazilian street community. In keeping with the principle of the child as the subject of his/her own development, (Swift, 1997: 150), the young people in partnership with the local priest and other church members were able to effect changes such as developing arts projects, a girls group and employment opportunities as well as lead the way in establishing the ethos and curriculum of the local school (Swift, 1997: 163-180).

for her ideas is provided by William James, a significant author in religious philosophy and, it might be argued, the inspiration for the movement that represents Paradigm Two.

In his 1902 text *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, James advocates the importance of personal experience in learning and this is described as the *a priori* of religious belief and activity. Not negating formal religion, he instead changes the priority and writes: 'we must make search for the original experiences which were the pattern setters to all (*the*) mass of suggested feeling and imitated conduct' (James, 1982: 6). Personal experience is recognised as primary and what he terms the 'institutional branch' is secondary. The former concerns the 'inner dispositions of man himself' and 'the relation goes direct from heart to heart, from soul to soul, between man and his maker' (James, 1982: 28). This claim is indeed summarised by Nye as such: 'God's ways of being with children and children's ways of being with God' (Nye, 2009: 5).

In the light of this, pedagogy therefore can no longer involve merely the transmission of information. Canadian scholar Tobin Hart claims that as spiritual knowledge concerns the affective dimension of life, it should not be proclaimed but rather drawn out (Hart, 2003: 229). As Nye's assertions marked a departure from Christian education with a theological basis, the ideas of Catholic educators such as Hart and Hyde depart from the idea of 'presentation' in learning. *A Rumour of Angels* by Peter Berger introduces the idea of 'signals of transcendence' (Berger, 1969: 70) in religious⁴⁵ education and this text similarly highlights an historical influence.

Berger suggests that being fully human involves having an 'intrinsic impulse' which corresponds to and trusts an order beyond the immediate. He suggests that religious learning takes place when experience comes to consciousness. Through his inductive pedagogy, he suggests that it is within everyday activities (such as play) that spiritual experience becomes a reality (Berger, 1969: 74-5). This experience then encourages personal meaning making. From a theological perspective, Berger's notion of 'inductive faith' incites an ontological relationship as the inspiration that moves one from experiencing God to being able to express statements about God (Berger, 1969: 76). Therefore, assertions about God are not inspired by Scripture or liturgy, but by everyday occurrences.

The idea highlights a movement away from any inherited or agreed notions of God. Rather than referring to the Trinitarian God, who as argued by Wright is revealed through Scripture

⁴⁵ Berger's text is not religion-specific.

and Ecclesiastical tradition (Wright, 1998: 72), Hyde for example prefers to draw on the concept of 'transcendent Other' (Hyde, 2008: 90). Akin to Berger, Hyde suggests that through everyday experiences, learners might perhaps encounter 'something of the presence of God' (Hyde, 2008: 90), but the representation of God is provisional. Alternative rhetoric such as 'Ultimate Unitary Being' (Hyde, 2008: 34) allows for the construction of a personal notion of such a being that is more inclusive and universal. Thus, whilst it allows for a Judeo-Christian representation, this is not exclusive within personal learning. Furthermore, Hyde's idea of 'ontological knowing' considers learning as a perception rather than an understanding. Therefore, starting with an holistic experience of mind, body and soul (Hyde, 2008: 89), he suggests that one might journey towards the perception of a 'transcendent Other' (Hyde, 2008: 34) but this does not represent conversion, or indeed the claiming of any belief about the transcendent as truth.

In summary, the principal perspectives of Paradigm Two are exemplified in the work of Christian scholars such as John Fisher who propose that spirituality is for the here and now and concerned with well-being and wholeness (Fisher, 1999: 30-31). Ontology is widely accepted as the precursor to epistemology and the process of gaining knowledge starts with the individual who comes into an awareness of spiritual and religious matters through ordinary experiences. In this paradigm 'knowing' pertains more to a resonance than an actualisation of thought and as reflected by John Dewey in *Experience and Nature*, the existential qualities of intuition, sense, feelings and perception that contribute to spiritual learning exist in a dimension other than thought consciousness (Dewey, 2008: 235).⁴⁶ Therefore, it must be noted that Paradigm Two presents a significantly different position to Paradigm One in terms of ontology, epistemology and pedagogy. It might also be argued that although the ideas of Nye and Hyde in particular are popular amongst church-based practitioners, the paradigm's priority pertains to 'spiritual education' rather than 'Christian education,' with spiritual nurture rather than faith development as its telos.

⁴⁶ Concerning 'knowing,' Dewey differentiates between consciousness and mind. Whereas the mind involves 'a whole system of meanings' (Dewey, 2008: 229), consciousness is concerned more with awareness or the perception of meanings. These meanings are for the here and now; they might be intermittent, vague and certainly not immediately actualised in language (Dewey, 2008: 230). Awareness and perception, following a continuum of meaning making, lead the individual contribute to the transformation of agreed meanings and attitudes (Dewey, 2008: 239).

These ideas are all underlined in the text *The Spirit of the Child* (Hay and Nye, 1998; 2006). This publication has been an influential factor in the formation of a contemporary theory regarding children's spirituality and serves to further underline the premise of Paradigm Two.

0.5 The Spirit of the Child

First published in 1998 and revised in 2006, David Hay and Rebecca Nye's book *The Spirit of the Child* offers ontological, epistemological and pedagogical assertions about the nature and role of spirituality in children's lives. Whilst coming from Christian faith perspectives (Hay, 2000: 3; Nye, 2004: 90), the authors nevertheless highlight the human dimension of spirituality first and foremost. In this text, little reference is made to the tradition or beliefs of the Christian faith. Yet the influence of their thesis has extended throughout the church internationally, contributing to the development of church-based spiritual pedagogy, particularly through the publications of a range of authors involved in promoting Christian education.⁴⁷

Hay and Nye's proposition is based on empirical data and endorses the recognition that spirituality is innate (Hay and Nye, 2006: 92), originating within but going beyond the ordinary (Hay and Nye, 2006: 59-60). Drawing on the work of zoologist Alister Hardy and noting how spirituality is biologically natural to all human beings inclusive of all ages from birth, Hay and Nye claim that spirituality is intrinsic to humanity and essential for human survival (Hay and Nye, 2006: 22-4). To be human is to be spiritual; therefore, it is also universal – for all peoples. It transcends doctrine and ideology as well as culture and creed, and is concerned with personal and communal awareness and perception (Hay and Nye, 2006: 63).

Hay and Nye promote the notion of a meta-human dimension of experience which takes spiritual learning away from what is known epistemologically to what is inspired ontologically (Hay and Nye, 2006: 109). Reflecting an idea from Rudolph Otto that an experience of the holy can come into consciousness (Otto, 1976: 15), affective categories such as flow (Hay and Nye, 2006: 68-9), tuning (Hay and Nye, 2006: 68), the felt sense (Hay and Nye, 2006: 70), wonder and awe (Hay and Nye, 2006: 71-2), and imagination (Hay and Nye, 2006: 72-3) all exemplify how one's intrinsic spiritual state, which is the starting point for spiritual growth, might be identified and nurtured. For example, the authors write that a young child's

⁴⁷ Such authors, previously listed above are: Ratcliffe, 2004; Yust, 2004; Copsey, 2005; Nye, 2009; Privett and Richards, 2009; Csinos, 2011; Beckwith and Csinos, 2013.

sense of mystery can be awakened by much more down to earth and familiar phenomena – simple events such as a flame appearing when a match is struck, or a light being switched on, or water coming out of a tap (Hay and Nye, 2006: 72).

Hay and Nye's research also indicates that learners can transcend objective truth claims by means of holistic experiences and through these experiences they can explore or 'test' religious views or perspectives without necessarily needing to embrace them (Hay and Nye, 2006: 168-171). As a result, children's own ideas drawn from their personal spiritual experiences are valued and accepted as meaningful. Again as an example, it is suggested that learners draw on secular language and images in order to more authentically describe their spiritual experiences. This they suggest is preferable to retreating to religious language which involves learners detaching themselves from what is personal and more 'real' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 132-3).⁴⁸

To that end, Hay and Nye consider personal meaning making as a priority in spiritual development, positing that the proponents of a 'purely cognitive approach' tend to ignore the experiential aspects of spiritual experience (Hay and Nye, 2006: 76). Reflecting Dewey, whose assertion is that awareness - sensing is an exception to the norm and therefore cannot be standardised (Dewey, 2008: 234), and James who suggests that one might acknowledge a mystical state of consciousness which is ineffable, noetic, transient and passive (James, 1982: 381-3), they argue:

cognitive signs of spiritual activity are in many cases the secondary products of spiritual stirrings found in awareness-sensing, mystery-sensing and value-sensing (Hay and Nye, 2006: 77).

A significant part of *The Spirit of the Child* pertains to a description of Hay and Nye's theory of 'relational consciousness.' This has become a popular way of describing spirituality (Wills 2005; Johnson, 2006; Pearmain, 2007; Hyde, 2008) and is presented in the text as 'an unusual plane of consciousness or perceptiveness' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 109). Furthermore, it describes an ontological connection between an individual and four categories of 'other' in dialogical partnerships. Whilst one category relates to a transcendent other referred to as God (albeit not defined in any specific terms), the dimensions of the world, community and the self are also described as foundations of spirituality, often providing a bridge to an experience of

⁴⁸ Accordingly, the MA research of the current author indicates that the children's responses to everyday experiences, when described in non-religious language, seem to be more authentic therefore more meaningful (Wills, 2005: 56-7). A further consideration of what is 'real' is considered in later chapters through the writing of Kierkegaard.

God⁴⁹ (Hay and Nye, 2006: 116). Therefore, the role of relational consciousness is not to overcome the opposition between the child and God but to allow the child to gain a heightened awareness of their *a priori* union. The ontological supposition is that there is spiritual potentiality in every child, no matter what their context might be.

Allusions to Being in terms of ontology are underpinned by references to the work of German philosopher Martin Heidegger. Hay and Nye's assertion that spirituality as an 'ever-present aspect of being human' is 'separate from and prior to the discursive intellect' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 134), is Heideggerian in nature, as is the notion that it cannot concern facts or rules. Again reflective of Heideggerian rhetoric, Hay and Nye claim that spiritual learning involves the 'disclosure that we are already immersed in Being' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 134). Relational consciousness, which pre-dates 'knowingness' as well as language and learning (Hay and Nye, 2006: 135), reinforces the suggestion that the spiritual life is only and already, Being. This allows learners to embrace the possibility and potentiality that is offered by their primal human state and therefore engage in authentic learning.⁵⁰ This leads the spiritual educator to focus more on Being than on doctrine (Hay and Nye, 2006: 135) and explored more fully in Chapter One, presents an existential ethos of education.

As the supposition here is of an *a priori* child-faith connection, this places at odds the notion that an authentic Christian education and therefore a life of faith is related to cognition and creed (Hay and Nye, 2006: 77) and as such indicates the movement away from the religious dimension of spirituality. This positing is noted as a dualism and, as highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, it is problematic for this thesis.

0.6 Dualism

At the outset of *The Spirit of the Child*, Hay and Nye refer to religion as having an exterior identity made manifest through churches, prayer books, weddings and Bibles. Allegedly associated with boredom, bigotry and persecution, they also argue that organised religion for many is 'firmly caught up in the cold brutalities of history' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 19). Therefore, along with inciting fanaticism and narrow-mindedness, a negative image of religion is portrayed (Hay and Nye, 2006: 19). This is dualistically positioned against the 'warmer' spirituality which is associated with 'love, inspiration, wholeness, depth, mystery and personal

⁴⁹ In Hay and Nye's text, term God is presented without inverted commas.

⁵⁰ Hay and Nye's ideas here signpost Chapter One. In this chapter, the ideas of Being, possibility, potentiality and authenticity are all outlined in detail.

devotions' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 19). Described as a journey rather than an end result, and a tree root whose life-giving water serves to support growth and blossoming (Hay and Nye, 2006: 20), spirituality is highlighted as holistic and having value for all, rather than narrow and only for a few.

A similar distinction is made by David Tacey who albeit a Catholic Tertiary educator, considers tradition and religion to be inadequate for spiritual religious education. His text *The Spirituality Revolution* (2004) assesses the role of the spiritual in the lives of students, noting how organised religion plays little part. He writes about what religion 'is' and lists several negative attributes such as patriarchal and masculinist, an archaic vision of reality, wholly implausible and unattractive to modern understanding, hierarchical and elitist, and dogmatic and external to our lives (Tacey, 2004: 36-7). In response he then presents his own dualism, suggesting what spirituality 'is.' This includes the view that spirituality is universal, concerned with connectedness and relatedness, democratic and non-hierarchical (Tacey, 2004: 38-9).

Tacey goes on to say that as spirituality is concerned with connectedness, nature and the holy, the personal spiritual life looks inward. As it begins in human experience (Tacey, 2004: 38) rather than being an obstacle to God as in Augustinian theology, the self actually becomes the channel to God who is already considered to be within, through the grace of creation.⁵¹ It seems that Tacey's students must make a choice. In this case they choose to choose, and in so doing, they choose their own freedom – freedom from the constraints of an externally influenced formal expression of religion to a more dynamic, inward and personal spirituality.

In the light of these views, the dichotomy between paradigms noted at the beginning of this chapter is evident. As already indicated, scholars who practice Christian education with the more ontological spiritual priority of Paradigm Two, position themselves away from the more 'evangelical' position of Paradigm One, this having an epistemological priority and involving claims to doctrinal truth. It seems then that church-based practitioners are also encouraged to choose. Their option, whilst still remaining within the Christian church context, is to choose the 'warmer' method of nurturing spirituality (Hay and Nye, 2006: 19) albeit without a rigorous theological foundation, or remain committed to the 'dogmatic and external' (Tacey, 2004: 3-7) approach that aims to secure faith and belief for a telos of salvation.

⁵¹ Further thinking on this comes from Matthew Fox whose creation theology, whilst not negating that of Augustine as cited above, suggests that all peoples are part of God's creative flow (Fox, 1983: 38). Therefore, when one seeks God one finds that (s)he is already there (Fox, 1983: 44).

This is further evidenced in literature authored by Tobin Hart and Clive Erricker, each for whom the choice is illustrated through liberationist rhetoric. For Hart, truth is personal, provisional and located in experience. Subsequently spiritual education must liberate individuals from inherited forms and dogmas. He argues that being inherited, therefore also offensive to the postmodern sensibility, the religious is only ever in a concentric relationship with the spirit (Hart, 2003: 214). Spirituality thus separates itself from that which is illusory and with which it is uneasy.⁵² Here the objective is negated in favour of liberationist practice and dualism is again in evidence. This idea is also reflected by Clive Erricker.⁵³ Erricker's thesis promotes the liberation of spirituality from the perceived hegemony of religious tradition. For example, he criticises the inclusion of Christian groups in schools (2007), the 'faith schooling' offered by Faith schools, and 'religious education' provision in state schools in the UK (Erricker, 2007: 51). His argument is that in all cases, the paradoxical notion of faith (Erricker, 2007: 52) is reduced to catechesis and doctrine, which is presented as truth to become the arbiter of 'beliefs, values and behaviour' (Erricker, 2007: 51). He considers the religion-faith relation to be untenable (Erricker, 2007: 52), and questions whether formal religion is actually necessary for a life of faith.⁵⁴

Erricker also critiques Christian pedagogy. In his view, catechetical methods illuminate mastery. In the text *Reconstructing Religious, Spiritual and Moral Education* (2000), co-authored with Jane Erricker, he illustrates his view by arguing that religious education perpetuates beliefs that have become institutionalised, understood in terms of 'a particular model of conceptualisation and representation' (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 30). Emphasising how 'metanarrical status is oppressive rather than liberating' (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 67), Erricker and Erricker consequently encourage readers away from this educative model. They emphasise 'the importance of the process of pedagogy rather than the inculcation of knowledge' (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 69) and highlight the importance of drawing on emotions as an example of moving away from these 'fixed points' (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 71).

⁵² As will be proposed later in the thesis, Hart's negation of the illusion of objective truth is also illusion; hence it is argued that it is the negation of the negation that affords real truth.

⁵³ Unlike previous authors cited, Erricker locates himself outside of a Christian context; however, his ideas are influential within Paradigm Two, so his thinking is included here.

⁵⁴ Erricker also in a later article suggests that religion might no longer be a 'bastion' against spiritual neglect in society 'if it ever was' (Erricker, 2002: 238).

As their thesis is that spirituality begins and ends with the human spirit and that any form of knowledge is temporary, Erricker and Erricker suggest that spiritual pedagogy should trade the certainty of metanarratives for the personal and local (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 47). They posit that the spiritual teacher should avoid mastery by allowing students the freedom to deconstruct and reconstruct given narratives. This is reminiscent of Jean-Francois Lyotard's postmodern argument that the certainty of the metanarrative should be deconstructed in favour of the personal and local (Lyotard, 1997: xxiv). This teacher listens to the students to assist them in constructing their own worldviews that are based on their personal experiences. In that way, they gain ownership of their beliefs by self-construction rather than imposed dogma (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 159) and it is their agency that allows for authentic spiritual learning. Learners now lead the way and, involving the whole self, they take responsibility for the creation of meanings that are realistic and authentic.

At this point, it becomes evident that there are also concerns regarding perspectives within Paradigm Two, not least with the dichotomy that results from dualistic positing. These concerns also prepare the ground for the philosophical exegesis that takes place in forthcoming chapters and they are highlighted in the section that follows.

0.7 Critique

Whilst the more explicit liberationist rhetoric of Erricker and Erricker which is rooted in a non-religious context and takes a humanistic position is potentially unsettling to the Christian educator, one might note that the seemingly innocuous views of Hay and Nye, Tacey, Hart and Hyde, present a similar scenario. Misrecognising their own illusions,⁵⁵ their idea of subjective learning is reflective of the overcoming of the 'error' of objective truth presented earlier. It might be suggested then that these priorities diminish the authority of the Christian tradition of which they are a part and signify a move away from any knowledge that is deemed to be true. As stated at the outset of this chapter, both paradigms are concerned with promoting an authentic and continuing life of faith. Even so, it might be argued that the well-intentioned idea of placing individuals at the centre of learning in Paradigm Two might actually destabilize the Christian ethos within which it is located so to establish other forms of 'truth.'

When considered philosophically, the divorce of subjective knowledge from objective truth claims is a concern. As identified by Nigel Tubbs in his text *The Philosophy of the Teacher* (2005), whilst the critical spiritual position of subjectivity and liberation is 'attractive to those

⁵⁵ Both misrecognition and illusion are considered educationally in Chapter Two.

who wish to combat the seemingly closed and totalising narrative of the enlightenment model' (Tubbs, 2005: 133), the spiritual teacher in rejecting objective truth and mastery, actually determines his or her own truth in equal measure to the master and facilitates this on behalf of the learners. This makes the position groundless and the teacher becomes another master in turn.

Furthermore, albeit intentional in utilising agency as a spiritual learning tool, it might be suggested that Hay and Nye et al minimise the value of any teacher who presents objective knowledge as true. When 'relational consciousness' takes the place of knowledge, teaching is inductive and meaning making is purely subjective. It must be questioned then how teachers might help learners to create their own truths from subjective meanings that are ethical and authentic to the Christian tradition.⁵⁶ Although the ontological and epistemological suppositions of Paradigm Two serve to validate the movement away from agreed truth⁵⁷ and those who present these truths, it is suggested that for authentic Christian education, these suppositions must be scrutinised.

First, one must also consider telos. It might be questioned to where, without any foundation of tradition and belief, spiritual emancipation might lead and one might wonder what learners are freed to. Educators must consider the result of emancipation and evaluate how far learners should consider the liberated experiential knowledge as 'true,' having already evaded all claims to truth. This paradigm encourages learners to construct truths from subjective meanings. But it might be argued that pure subjectivism, whilst promoting well-being, has only temporary worth. Issuing from an ontological foundation, the motivation of this position in some cases is to promote self- fulfilment and personal happiness (Hart, 2003: 48; Hyde, 2008: 100). Yet there is little sense that such spiritual nurture affects long term change; therefore, its claim to authenticity must also be evaluated.

The points considered here are underlined by Andrew Wright, cited at the outset of this chapter.⁵⁸ In the article 'Dancing in the fire,' he responds to Clive Erricker's view of religious education as outlined in his article 'Shall we dance?' (Erricker, 2001: 20-35). Wright suggests that Erricker's refusal to differentiate the absolute from the contingent is problematic and that in proposing absolute freedom, he perpetuates the metanarrative he sought to negate (Wright, 2001: 121). Wright suggests that it is possible to devise 'linguistic models of reality

⁵⁶ This evaluation takes place in Chapter One through the lens of the Heideggerian philosophy that has not least influenced Hay and Nye's concept of Being.

⁵⁷ This movement will be critiqued more fully in forthcoming chapters.

⁵⁸ Andrew Wright is first introduced on page 15.

that claim legitimacy on the grounds of their convergence with a realistic world beyond the fictions of the imagination' (Wright, 2001: 122), thus proposing that the mediation which comes from the contingency of religious traditions might contribute to education rather than become an obstacle.

Wright proposes that his own notion of critical pedagogy aims to allow students to embrace ambiguity (Wright, 2001:133). In so doing the paradox of the perpetuating metanarrative is identified and evaluated, allowing for the critique of all sides. Nonetheless, as Wright's proposition is framed by 'the disciplines of religious and theological study' (Wright, 2001:132), it might be argued that his position is only critical within a certain doctrinal boundary and therefore it must be questioned how individuals make meaning without having to succumb to epistemological hegemony. Additionally, one might consider that Wright, writing in response to Erricker indeed establishes his own dichotomy and as such this must be also critiqued.

The points raised here will all be explored more fully in the chapters that follow. However, this critique also highlights the significance of the current thesis. To this point, the discussion has identified the movement of Paradigm Two away from the perceived illusions (errors) of objective truth, mastery and cognition, recognising that it is this movement that establishes the dichotomy of dualistic positing. In this thesis however, dualism is considered illusory itself. In the following chapters, as the perceived illusions of each paradigm are explored philosophically through the philosophies of Heidegger and Hegel respectively, the illusion of dualism is also uncovered. In subsequent chapters these illusions will be revisited and reimagined in the light of more contemporary philosophy. Contributing to the development of a new educational perspective in Christian education, this thesis also proposes that it is not the overcoming of illusion, but recognition of the illusion of the illusion that provides the starting point for learning, and this will be outlined in detail in chapters Two and Three.

Later in the thesis, the movement itself will be considered in depth. In Chapter Three, examining the movement of faith in terms of Kierkegaardian philosophy, its educative significance is highlighted. Moreover, it recognises education as Spirit. The educational movement in this new perspective is not one of overcoming or moving away, hence it does not require that educators choose. Rather it re-imagines the relation between two paradigms, or learning partners. As such, the discussion reconsiders the relations of learning and the learner, the relation of learning and the teacher, and the roles of immediacy or objectivity in relation to truth; these serve to underpin the proposal of a new educational perspective that embraces each in an interplay of ideas rather than as opposites.

As will be presented in detail in Chapter Six, the educational movement of 'Bildung' serves to promote the idea of learning as a movement and outlines the idea of interplay in the relationship of self and other. At this point however, the dichotomy is critiqued, paving the way for conclusions in this chapter and signposting the wider thesis.

0.8 Overcoming the dichotomy

In an article reflecting dichotomies within religious education in Latvia, Anta Filipsons alludes to the positing of one paradigm against another as unhelpful and unnecessary. Highlighting the strong resistance of a growing atheist population towards religion and an equally strong resistance towards any 'critical reflection on the issues of faith' on the part of the mainstream church (Filipsons, 2009: 122), she questions if a critical conversation between the two can ever be possible (Filipsons, 2009: 122). Filipsons locates her question within the discourse of spiritual education and similarly expands on the contrasting views of two paradigms. She considers the priority of each paradigm - in her first paradigm the priority is 'religious literacy' and in the second, 'spiritual awareness' (Filipsons, 2009: 123) - and in so doing identifies each paradigm with an author, that is, Andrew Wright and David Hay respectively.

Filipsons summarises Wright and Hay's views as such:

Wright warns against anti-intellectualism, individualism, subjectivism, and emotivism, whilst Hay concentrates on the problem of oppressive hegemony of secularised reason and modern secular society (Filipsons, 2009: 123).

However, she argues that such differences in priority lead to fragmentation, which in turn leads to a lack of balance in religious education. She also criticises each scholar's rhetoric regarding conversation and debate whilst openly attacking the other in publications, identifying how each leaves the debate to be had at practitioner level (Filipsons, 2009: 123).

It is Filipsons's conjecture that each approach is responsive to the perceived danger of the other. She also argues that by avoiding danger, only a one-sided view of the world is possible, perpetuating the hegemony that is deemed to be evaded (Filipsons, 2009: 123). As Filipsons notes, dualistic positing suggests a relationship that cannot be reconciled (Filipsons, 2009: 125). In terms of the current discussion therefore, the idea of a personal spirituality that exists *a priori* is in opposition to that with a salvific imperative. Being irreconcilable, a tension for the Christian educator with an interest in spirituality becomes evident and it seems that one must

choose. Avoiding danger and tension seems to be the main objective; yet as will be indicated particularly in Chapter Three, both danger and tension serve as educational tools.⁵⁹

To that end it might be argued that to move forward, educators might consider how to accept the risk that comes with embracing rather separating from the other. As Filipstone argues, without any co-operation and critical reflection between the two positions, religious education will never be holistic, or indeed both academic (religious) and spiritual (Filipstone, 2009: 125). Or, without an acknowledgement of the dangers cited above, education is groundless and cannot move forward towards authenticity. Filipstone's assertion that the dichotomy between paradigms might be addressed through co-operation and critical reflection suggests the need for both a dialogue and a dialectic. Her ideal also includes mutuality and a sense of recognising one in the other (Filipstone, 2009: 123; 125).

An example of dialogical practice is *Godly Play*. Devised by American scholar Jerome Berryman and based on the wondering questions of the Jewish faith, *Godly Play* is an hermeneutical method of Christian education that reflects the mutual relationship between the spiritual and religious as reflective of the relationship of the child and God. It embraces each in an holistic manner. *Godly Play* provides a way of sharing Biblical texts with children in a way, it is proposed, that does not impose an adult model but rather shares and nurtures a child's spiritual life (Lamont, 2007: 86).

Godly Play advocate Peter Privett points out that in this method 'the starting point is the child's agenda' and there are no given outcomes (Privett, 2009: 115). Through visual stimuli, an egalitarian positioning of adults and children on floor space, a series of 'wondering' questions, and the opportunity to respond through creative activities, children are encouraged to engage with Bible stories for themselves and embrace it internally (Lamont, 2007: 90). Thus, the child's own personal life is the starting point for learning; however, as this method uses the language of the Christian faith, which as in Berryman's rhetoric is the tool by which inner spiritual concepts are developed and personal images of God are created (Berryman, 1991: 148-9), the two are mutually held in balance. The *Godly Play* founder writes: 'religious language is the way we make meaning at the limits of being and knowing' and continues: 'the ultimate standpoint is at the edge of our existence where we sense the presence of God' (Berryman, 1991: 149).

⁵⁹ Through the writing of Kierkegaard and Gillian Rose, the idea of avoiding danger is also considered in later chapters and is significant in proposing a new educational perspective.

In this method children are not expected to evaluate the concept of God, but accept the dialogical and ontological relationship between themselves and God as the starting point for spiritual learning. Thus, Privett proposes that this kind of play might afford salvation (Privett, 2009: 107). This is not salvation from error as described above; neither does it expect a simple either/or response. Here salvation represents a more complex, multi-dimensional viewpoint of God, doctrine and the Bible and Privett describes this as constructive theology. He writes: 'who cares where the sin is' and suggests that salvation comes about through the development of the child in response to the open questions and imagination of the *Godly Play* method (Privett, 2009: 109). The adult formulated theology of right and wrong is deconstructed in favour of an approach which considers as Jesus did: 'anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it' (Privett, 2009: 110).⁶⁰

It might be argued however that while space is created for personal discovery and flexible reactions to learning (Privett, 2009: 109), less space is created in *Godly Play* for embracing the danger introduced by Filipson above. In this model, as the ontological supposition is of the prior relationship with God, questioning assists storytelling rather than embracing existential questioning; furthermore, creativity reflects a personal response rather than any wrestling with ideas and concepts. The riskier methods here promote uncertainty and doubt. Yet as Tillich proposes, doubt is essential for faith (Tillich, 2001: 25).

As *Godly Play* is located in the Judeo-Christian tradition, it might also be argued that the aim of the Christian practitioner will always be to encourage children and young people towards beliefs and lifestyle choices based on this faith; tradition will always have the upper hand. Conversely as already noted, the teacher such as Privett poses a risk to the tradition when the individual learner is considered the starting point for meaning making. Subjectivity is afforded a higher value than the tradition itself and it seems that he, whilst encouraging children to draw on religious language, actually negates the authority of the tradition, minimising its importance and misconstruing its place in promoting an authentic life of faith. Philosophically then, this is misrecognition.⁶¹ Without the recognition of the other as a broken half of the self (Tubbs, 2005: 15), each partner is illusory and unfulfilled. Therefore, a dialectical approach must be considered.

⁶⁰ Mark 10 vs 15; New International Version.

⁶¹ The terms mutual recognition and misrecognition pertain to Hegelian thought and are explored further in Chapter Two.

A dialectical approach is proposed by Ana Maria Rizzuto (Rizzuto, 1979: 209). Her idea of a middle ground created between two positions recognises and accepts the danger and tension already introduced. As a clinical researcher and practitioner in psychological and pastoral care, Rizzuto's research project *The birth of the living God* focuses on people's images of God. Grounded in the lives of patients who revealed concepts of God that changed and evolved according to their life experiences, she considers one's relationship with or image of God as a transitional object relation (Rizzuto, 1979: 177). In this respect the truth of an image of 'God' lies in the space between the personal and the traditional.

Whilst the image of God as *fait accompli* might be considered illusory to some, she argues for a subjective reality. In fact, even if the God object might be rejected, experiences such as the death of a loved one, or personal rejection, might inspire a return (Rizzuto, 1979: 179). This has significance for the relationship between the learner and the tradition in Christian education. It suggests that one's image or view of 'God' or transcendent 'Other' will adapt and evolve in the light of one's personal context, experience and encounters with others (Rizzuto, 1979: 209). She suggests that there are as many shapes for God as there are people (Rizzuto, 1979: 180), therefore one agreed or accepted form is impossible. The Judeo-Christian representation of God is thus one illustration of the transitional object but other forms influenced by family, culture, class and the sub-culture of organised religion are also valid.

Rizzuto warns against the transmission of one view of God, noting this as potentially detrimental to the learner's own psychic state. She notes that when the gap forms between the individual's own representation and that which is taught, 'our words will confuse, frighten or even make them close their ears' (Rizzuto, 1979: 211). However, the space that exists between an individual and God represents the nexus of inner and outer realities. In this space truth is illusory. But it is also the space where the learner 'finds the full relevance of his objects and meaning for himself' (Rizzuto, 1979: 209). Here reality and illusion are not contradictory but must be embraced.

This is underlined by Canadian scholar Joyce Bellous, who as a Christian educator with an interest in children's spirituality, advocates a pedagogy that recognises the transitional space. For Bellous, the space is the starting point from which learners can make meaning. For example, the transitional object 'God' might be explored in this space; equally Christian truths in the light of one's own personal contingency might also be considered. Meaning making here does not involve inhering given truths or indeed learners constructing their own truths. Rather in the space, learners test the images formed from their own subjective experiences as

well as those transmitted to them. In critiquing and testing, Bellous suggests that these images become more authentic to the individual and thus have a longer lasting impact. She argues that the role of the Christian educator is to pay attention to both the learner *and* tradition, and to encourage authentic education in the middle space (Bellous, 2006: 207).

It might be argued then that this alternative situation acknowledges the difficulty in ascertaining mutuality and accepts that there is no ultimate solution.⁶² It accepts the provisionality of the God-concept and notes that this is subject to change in the light of context, contingency and the experiences of life. However, when constructed away from the Biblical description of the Trinitarian God, it has the potential for groundlessness and illusion. Tubbs proposes that educators should reconsider how they manage the dichotomy of the two positions. Teachers and learners do not need to choose one or the other, or seek the unity of one with the other. Rather as each position relates to the other as the self-reflection of oppositions experienced in this middle space (Rose, 1992: xii; Tubbs, 2005: 12-16), the dichotomy becomes an error. However, the relational space becomes significant as a learning tool and this will be outlined more fully in due course.

0.9 Concluding remarks

This Literature Review, which presents the major research question and context for this project, also provides a template for the overall thesis. Written in response to perceived problems regarding ontology, epistemology and pedagogy in two distinct yet influential paradigms of Christian education, critical appraisal of these problems has served to identify the need to embrace perspectives in learning that pertain to uncertainty, danger and doubt, rather than certainty or safety. It is suggested that pedagogy with epistemological certainty as promoted in Paradigm One is open to critique when one considers the perceived error of truth in-itself. Furthermore, transmissional methods must be re-evaluated in the light of a consideration of power in learning relationships. These issues are extensively outlined by Hegel in his text *Phenomenology of Spirit*; to that end, an Hegelian analysis in Chapter Two will underline further the problems regarding authenticity in education and raise questions that highlight the need for the proposed new perspective.

It is also suggested that the safer approach of Paradigm Two that aims to avoid the error of certainty and determine more personal truths, is itself an error. It might be argued that the

⁶² The ideas of Rizzuto and Bellous described here do not form part of the critique but signpost later chapters in which the difficulty of learning about God is explored.

ontological foundation of learning, liberating itself from doctrinal frameworks, puts both the learners and their faith at risk when it is not grounded in a context of tradition and belief. The work of Kierkegaard, highlighted in Chapter Three, provides a more rigorous explanation of the dangers of liberation and presents an alternative movement that is the leap of faith. This chapter also signposts the idea of the middle space and paves the way for the second half of the thesis.

In the Literature Review, concepts such as the dialectic, illusion, tension and misrecognition have been introduced. These all have a philosophical connotation and as well as underlining difficulties with the paradigms explored, they highlight ideas that contribute to new theory. It is later proposed that each has educative significance; hence how each inspires the proposal of a new perspective in Christian education is outlined. It is suggested here that not only does this thesis signal originality in terms of the new perspective: it illuminates issues within Christian education that are broader than a critique of methods, materials or even theological points of view.

At the outset of the philosophical exposition in this thesis, a deeper consideration of the nature of the learner is presented. From the early stages of the Literature Review and throughout, the significance of the Being of the learning individual has been highlighted as well as its relationship to what is learnt. This underlines the quest for authenticity in learning and for a meaningful life of faith. Furthermore, as already indicated, this thesis considers learning as Spirit, thus suggesting an existential basis for learning. Through an Heideggerian analysis of Being and existence, the following chapter evaluates the relation of the learner to both learning and the learning environment and critically considers if an existential perspective in education might contribute to authenticity in an individual's life of faith.

CHAPTER ONE: BEING

1.1 Introduction

In Paradigm Two, the ontological foundation of learning identified as the learner's *a priori* spiritual state is considered a pedagogical priority. The learner is at the centre of all learning. Therefore, epistemology and more significantly truth gained from external sources are placed as secondary. As such, meaning making is personalised and truths are constructed in the light of the learners' own personal spiritual experience and awareness. In the Literature Review this is evidenced particularly in the thinking of Brendan Hyde (2008) and Rebecca Nye (2009), each of whom write in response to the more historical assertions of religious philosophers such as William James.⁶³ Furthermore, the co-authored work of David Hay with Rebecca Nye evidences the influence of Twentieth Century German philosopher Martin Heidegger (Hay and Nye, 2006: 134). Hay and Nye consider that spiritual education uncovers the ontological dimension that is already present in learners' lives and they identify this dimension as Being.⁶⁴ Therefore, in this perspective of Christian education, the educator first serves to identify the learner's prior spiritual state and from this, promote personal learning that is inspired by Being.

In Heideggerian philosophy, when Being is considered as the starting point for learning, not only is education concerned with meaning, it is also concerned with the meaning of the learner who is indeed the meaning of Being. This is an existential perspective, the principles of which it is argued, must be understood before being applied as a perspective in Christian education.⁶⁵ The current chapter aims to undertake this task.⁶⁶ Through an outline of Heidegger's philosophy of Being as presented in the text *Being and Time* (1962), the nature of the learning individual is explored. Furthermore, the themes of existence, possibility and authenticity are addressed in terms of the relation of learning to the learner as well as the process of learning. The discussion here also reflects on how Being provides the opportunity for the priority of potentiality, and critically assesses the role of the world and others in a learning individual's existential education.

⁶³ See page 30.

⁶⁴ See page 34.

⁶⁵ This is the case in several examples within Paradigm Two.

⁶⁶ The aim of this chapter is to underpin the recognition within Paradigm Two, of Being as an educational starting point. The discussion also considers whether this might be valid for Christian education.

It is important to note that Heidegger's philosophy not only concerns Being as an ontological state, but the question of the meaning of Being that belongs to all entities (Heidegger, 1962: 38). Thus, whilst it also has implications for epistemology, moreover it implies that meaning and truth are already within Being. In this chapter, it is noted how this is problematic for an educational context that aims to nurture learners in a Christian life of faith and the discussion highlights several issues that have not necessarily been recognised by the Christian scholars who promote such a perspective. This further underlines the assertion made earlier that the seemingly innocuous method of placing of a learner centre stage might illuminate philosophical problems. To that end the inadequacies of some Paradigm Two perspectives are highlighted, indicating the need for a new perspective and therefore the outcomes of this thesis.

1.2 Background

For Heidegger, all learning is concerned with the meaning of existence (Heidegger, 1962: 25). Existence begins and ends with the Being that belongs to entities (Heidegger, 1962: 29). Spiritual education then is authentic when it takes place through the Being that belongs to the learner. In the context of the basic state of what Heidegger names Being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962: 90), authentic learners are never separated from their own potentiality-for-Being (Heidegger, 1962: 167), or possibility. As a state of openness, potentiality-for-Being is always ahead of itself; however, to ensure that learning is personal and not standardised, it simultaneously comes back to its own potentiality-for-Being within temporality (Heidegger, 1962: 388).

To that end, there is no 'other.' Indeed, here the influence of other pertains to inauthenticity and is rejected (Heidegger, 1962: 154). As learning is a movement of Being, there is no relation to investigate. There is no gap to overcome; neither is there any middle space in which to explore the mediation of knowledge and knower.⁶⁷ Learning rather takes place through the inquiry into the meaning of Being. As learners consider the meaning of their Being as inquirers (Heidegger, 1962: 26-7), they simultaneously are the Being of the inquiry and the meaning of Being.

These propositions will be explained more fully later in this chapter; nevertheless, it is important to note at the outset that Heidegger's philosophy is neither dialogical nor dialectical therefore does not seek any solution to the issue of dualism. It does not look outside of Being

⁶⁷ This is a concept explored more fully in Chapter Three onwards.

for truth. This is illuminated further by a consideration of the historical context of Heidegger's work: therefore, a brief overview is provided now in order to contextualise the philosophical ideas presented later in this chapter.

1.3 Context

Heidegger's early writings range from papers written in the period of the First World War to the text significant to the current discussion: *Being and Time*. Although it is a substantial work, *Being and Time* was developed behind the scenes over a number of years through lectures and seminars and was produced almost 'on demand' in 1927 (Krell, 1978: 16-7). This text includes the proposal that philosophy requires a new method of inquiry. This inquiry into how human Being is perceived and understood has re-imagined philosophy. For example, his publications include a critique of the knowledge-theory paradigm of Descartes and those of his 'school' (Krell, 1978: 9) that prevalent at the time, concerned subjective representation. Although Heidegger claims that in the light of the maxim 'cogito ergo sum,'⁶⁸ Descartes 'is credited with the departure point of modern philosophical inquiry,' he nevertheless calls for a new priority for the 'I' that thinks and argues that it is not until the nature of Being has been determined that subjectivity can claim authenticity (Heidegger, 1962: 72).

Re-imagining the meaning of phenomenology, already understood in Hegelian terms as the means of coming to absolute subjectivity, Heidegger proposes that phenomenal methodology should proceed not 'to' an end result but take place within 'the immediate awareness of existence' (Gelven, 1970: 35). He also challenges Hegel whose systematisation of Spirit is antithetical to his view that Spirit is multi-various and incomplete (Krell, 1978: 11). Writing in opposition to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology (albeit having been mentored by Husserl), Heidegger rejects the notion that the individual mind contains *a priori* symbols, contents and attributes that are directed at objects in order to make meaning (Dreyfus, 1991: 3). Additionally, in reaction to neo-Kantian ideas, he posits that it is human existence that provides meaning rather than knowledge and intuition, transcendence or categories of thought.

Rejecting epistemology as the foundation of learning, the problems of logic for Heidegger must be dealt with not in the mind but in a trans-logical context (Krell, 1978: 11). In a commentary entitled *Being-in-the-world* (1991), Hubert Dreyfus describes Heidegger's stance

⁶⁸ Descartes' cogito ergo sum, first used in Latin in his text *Principles of Philosophy* is popularly translated as 'I think therefore I am.' www.journalofinterest.com/thoughts/cogito-ergo-sum/, accessed on 13/06/2016.

more specifically. He identifies how *Being and Time* highlights the deficiencies of the philosophers of thought, claiming that they 'misdescribed and misinterpreted human Being' (Dreyfus 1991: 1). For Heidegger, there is no such thing as 'coming to know'⁶⁹ and any approach to knowledge such as the Hegelian system that accepts division or circularity (Heidegger, 1962: 27), begins from a false premise. To put it simply, (and as also reflected in perspectives within Paradigm Two), rational objective truth is in error.

Heidegger's alternate proposition claims that knowledge of an entity or phenomenon is already manifest as its possibility (Heidegger, 1962: 33). Possibility is otherwise termed potentiality-for-Being (Heidegger, 1962: 136). In order to make sense of things, learners must consider pre-ontology which involves 'asking about the nature of this understanding of Being that we do not know' (Dreyfus, 1991: 3). When learning takes place through the Being of the learner, knowledge equates to Being. This then avoids the means by which the learner might 'fall' into the world of definition (Heidegger, 1962: 219). Instead Beings learn through their own potentiality-for-Being that is existentially Being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962: 78).

Epistemological divisions concerning the relation of the knower and known are thus rendered as inauthentic. Tubbs suggests that the attraction of Heidegger's thinking for education is its opposition to any project that 'knows in advance the ends or truths it must achieve' (Tubbs, 2005: 132). For the teacher who values open-endedness in learning, this position combats the 'seemingly closed and totalising narrative of the Enlightenment model' and their philosophies of thought (Tubbs, 2005: 133). Learning through awareness rather than ascertaining absolute knowledge becomes the most appropriate form of education and this is certainly resonant of the literature of Paradigm Two.⁷⁰

From this historical starting point, the philosophical notion Being as presented in *Being and Time* is now outlined to address the issue of authenticity included in the primary research question.⁷¹ Key themes such as essence, potentiality, possibility, ontology and authenticity are considered philosophically and their influence within the Christian spiritual education of Paradigm Two is noted.

1.4 Being

⁶⁹ This phrase is resonant of 'coming to faith' first introduced on page 16.

⁷⁰ See pages 29-33.

⁷¹ The primary research question is: How can a new perspective of Christian education inspire learners to an authentic life of faith?

The entity who 'is' at the centre of educational inquiry is the learner. Yet for Heidegger, the task of defining authentically what is meant by 'is,' is an impossible task. The more significant undertaking, as has already been identified, is to give an ontological answer not only to the question of what the Being of the learner might be but also to the question of the meaning of the Being which belongs to all (Heidegger, 1962: 27). In this way Being equates to authenticity in education and inspires a perspective that considers how learners become transparent in their own Being.

In the first place Being is designated as essence or Being-as-it-is. It therefore cannot be defined or described (Heidegger, 1962: 67). It is the prior and uncontingent state of Being that belongs to all humans. Negating the need to be brought into form (Heidegger, 1978: 220) or subjective representation, essence provides the starting point for the existential analytic which moves the inquiry forward. The manner of Being which the learner possesses is termed *Dasein* (Heidegger, 1962: 32). *Dasein*, which etymologically means 'being there' (Heidegger, 1962: 27) is the *a priori* condition of humanity. Being primordial it exists before one's understanding of one's self as an entity. It also understands itself as its own possibility for existence; possibility ensures it has no definition, does not include fixed ideas, and neither requests nor offers any desirable outcomes. Indeed, there are no limits to what it can become. Since it includes Being (essence), its hallmark is its 'Being to be' (Heidegger, 1962: 33). As such, the way in which each *Dasein* exists establishes the foundation for an authentic understanding of self which is reflective of one's own essential state and the possibility of the self that it inspires.

Heidegger asserts that *Dasein* is the possibility of all ontologies (Heidegger, 1962: 34). It is therefore pre-ontological. With this he promotes a wider view of ontology than that offered in Paradigm Two. For instance, Brendan Hyde describes ontological spirituality as a 'reality' that 'belongs to every human Being' (Hyde, 2008: 14). This notion of 'reality' however is antithetical to Heidegger's position of possibility. From an Heideggerian perspective, 'reality' suggests that whilst *a priori*, ontology also exists in the realm of consciousness and thus is 'ready to hand' (Heidegger, 1962: 225). This is both inauthentic and closed to possibility.

Acknowledging pre-ontological *Dasein* as possibility rather than reality provides the foundation for the identification of Being as a state, rather than 'a being' as an entity. As each *Dasein* is distinctive and to each individual learner, when expressed, the learner becomes resolute as a unique and therefore authentic demonstration of Being. Accordingly, the possibility that *Dasein* expresses from its essential state ensures that the learner does not

become a determinate entity, but Being towards his or her own potentiality-for-Being (Heidegger, 1962: 236). As Heidegger writes, 'we have no right to resort to dogmatic constructions and to apply just any idea to Being and actuality to this entity' (Heidegger, 1962: 37).

As *Dasein* contains the possibility of Being as it 'chooses' itself (Heidegger, 1962: 68), it is therefore inclusive and has no boundaries in terms of how a human Being can develop (Heidegger, 1962: 34) or indeed learn. This is important for pedagogy. In colloquial terms, the learner's essence is a blank canvas from which *Dasein* issues forth its potentialities. Thus, spiritual learning involves the continuation of learners' own potentialities in what they create, understand or become. *Dasein* represents one's understanding of learning reflected ontologically upon the way it is interpreted (Heidegger, 1962: 303) and as such gives philosophical validation to the open-ended educational methods promoted by scholars in Paradigm Two. Spiritual education concerns who learners can be instead of what information or knowledge they can gain (Heidegger, 1962: 236).

The basic state of Being is revealed as Being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962: 78). This state is prior to *Dasein* but locates Being in a wider context, considering the *Dasein* of others and acknowledging its own place in history. As stated earlier, Heidegger's philosophy does not acknowledge a gap between self and other; the 'world' as presented here is not a defined space nor is it concerned with corporeality and physical encounter (Heidegger, 1962: 79). Rather the 'world' and therefore the *Dasein* of others, is understood as the open-ness of Being (Heidegger, 1978: 252). This is a non-physical realm which allows for entities to dwell alongside each other (Heidegger, 1962: 80). It also allows *Dasein's* potentiality to become manifest: not spatially but factically (Heidegger, 1962: 82).⁷² However 'Being-in-the-world' is a state of *Dasein* which is necessary *a priori* but not sufficient for completely determining *Dasein's* Being (Heidegger, 1962: 79).

When founded on Being-in-the-world, *Dasein* is free for its own possibility: it has a choice. This choice might be aligned with the choice required by Tacey's students presented earlier.⁷³ In Heidegger's phenomenology, *Dasein* can be authentic or inauthentic. One choice is to be 'in' the world tangibly; with this choice *Dasein* positions itself 'towards the world' and in turn relates to it in its 'everydayness' (Heidegger, 1962: 86). It can come to 'know' entities in the

⁷² Facticity is an Heideggerian term describing knowledge of the self as grounded in Being (Heidegger, 1962: 82).

⁷³ See page 35.

world as facts and objects but these are not experienced ontologically (Heidegger, 1962: 84): rather they are provided externally. 'Knowing' the world factically then establishes a relationship between knower and known which subsequently leads to separation (Heidegger, 1962: 114-19). Heidegger posits that when boundaries between entities are established, the interpretations of knowledge provided do not necessarily represent existentially the meaning of the Being of the entity but include the mediation of knowledge which leads to error.

When conforming to the world in such a way that it evades its self, *Dasein* becomes inauthentic. According to Heidegger, such an entity has 'fallen' (Heidegger, 1962: 220). 'Falling' occurs when *Dasein* is 'not itself' (Heidegger, 1962: 151). Having chosen to 'know,' *Dasein* loses its possibility and is cut off from its primordial relationship of Being-in-the-world. It is then considered as Being-towards-the-world, rather than Being-in-the-world. Heidegger embraces what these terms mean in the phrase 'average everydayness' (Heidegger, 1962: 225). In everydayness, inauthenticity adheres to others in a way that does not represent true *Dasein*. Here *Dasein* has fallen away from itself; it is no longer about Being but is an entity that has become. It is also about being 'enlightened about oneself' and concerning the fixed and definite rather than possible and potential, it pertains to 'knowing it all' (Heidegger, 1962: 222).

The others who compromise Being's authentic state are named 'the they' and represent all that is public and 'average.' They make Being manifest as 'average everydayness' (Heidegger, 1962: 225); that is in relation to 'the they,' what is revealed as an entity or as knowledge becomes a thrown projection of Being that exists without *Dasein's* 'Being to be' (Heidegger, 1962: 33). It might be argued that 'the they' are made manifest as corporate organisations, religious or political movements, or indeed the participants of Paradigm One. However, Heidegger notes that 'the 'they' cannot necessarily be described or correlated with specific peoples or organisations (Heidegger, 1962: 165-6). The entities or knowledge they reveal are those which are seen, accepted, interpreted and understood in the realm of public discourse. Being is no longer possibility but conformity; all entities look and behave the same and aspire to the same levels of success (Heidegger, 1962: 164).

On the other hand, when *Dasein* chooses to acknowledge Being-in-the-world 'as it is' (Heidegger, 1962: 84), existence becomes an open question (Heidegger, 1978: 238). This choice is for authenticity: the authentic character of *Dasein* is grounded *a priori* upon the state of Being which is Being-in-the-world. The world then is not a place for definitive ways to be or behave, or beliefs to be held. Any projection of *Dasein* takes place in the open space between

Beings in a shared existence: not in a subject/object separation. Therefore, identity and relationships are not factual or present-at-hand but understand all Beings as entities with their own potentiality (Heidegger, 1962: 87).

The notion of 'falling' is illustrated in a more contemporary context by Clive Erricker. In his early chapter in the text *Reconstructing Religious, Spiritual and Moral Education*, Erricker equates 'falling' with error in his appraisal of traditional religious education methodology. He criticises teachers who draw on the objectivity of doctrinal claims to establish truth and argues that whilst they purport to ratify them as authentic by locating them in an historical and theological context (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 47), this actually equates to inauthenticity.⁷⁴ He argues that this method, which involves bypassing the Being of the individual in the process of learning, 'puts the idea of spiritual education in great danger' (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 47.) The potentiality of the learner's Being is halted by the universality of what he or she is to come to know. By presenting an alternative non-indoctrinatory pedagogy that places the individual at the centre of learning, Erricker seeks to prevent learners from falling into the error of accepting objective truth claims (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 47). He also aims to devolve control in learning.

As described by Jack Priestley in the introduction to same text, both Clive and Jane Erricker represent 'a long thin line of minority protest' against spirituality 'delivered as abstract knowledge' (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: x). Priestley, on behalf of Erricker and Erricker notes that for children, such education is 'no help to them in living out their personal lives' and proposes that 'children are perfectly capable of being active participants in their own social and spiritual education (Priestley, 2000: x). Erricker continues with the claim that 'the epistemological framework we adopt tends to be determined by the outcomes we wish to achieve' (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 47). Therefore, he suggests that when objective knowledge is embraced by individuals and pertains to that which is accepted, unquestioned and publicly interpreted, control is maintained on the part of educators.⁷⁵ His mission is to address the error of such a method which (in Heideggerian terms) reflects the 'falling' of spirituality as potentiality, into 'the they.'

In a second example, David Tacey similarly criticises 'educational authority' where methods of teaching involve the transmission of information rather than the transformation of the learner

⁷⁴ Erricker and Erricker argue that Christian educators such as Andrew Wright are guilty of inspiring spiritual 'falling' and might be described as examples of 'the they' (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 47).

⁷⁵ The issues of power and control in education are explored more fully in Chapter Four.

(Tacey, 2004: 59). Again, religious education systems are cited as the others who allow authenticity to be divorced from the learning process. In his research, he ascertains that young people consider that spiritual education should be a 'journey into hidden depths and self-discovery' (Tacey, 2004: 59). However, he points out that for many, religious education conceals their own spiritual identity and in this way they experience 'falling.' He writes: 'religion is dogmatic and external to our lives. It imposes laws and rules upon us without enquiring into the nature of the self that it is transforming' (Tacey, 2004: 37). He also argues that religious education cares less for the lives of the learners and their 'little stories' (Tacey, 2004: 37) than maintaining its own 'eternal validity' (Tacey, 2004: 33). Instead he proposes that education should draw out what is within, fusing the Being of the learner with the learning process and that spirit, also integral to the learning process, be free for its own possibility: 'diverse, plural and manifold' (Tacey, 2004: 38).

Instead, a pedagogy that is founded on the learner's own self and discovers ways of empowering the 'deeply felt impulse that is the innate spirituality of children' (Hart, 2003: 173), allows educators 'to let their authentic or spiritual voices be heard' (Bosacki, 2001:163). Here the authentic learner does not look outside of Being for its truth. The truth of meaning begins and ends with the Being that belongs to the self. The authenticity of the learner is a key theme and is explored further now.

1.5 Authenticity

As described in the Literature Review, both paradigms address the issue of separation. For educators rooted in the Augustinian tradition, the ontological separation between God and man brought about by sin is overcome through repentance and redemption; these actions signal the beginning of a life of faith. Epistemologically, thought is in opposition to truth (Tubbs, 2009: 42). Hence knowledge of God is gained only when one overcomes the claiming of self, the material and the physical as sources of truth. Turning to accept the meta-physical God as truth (Tubbs, 2009: 47), the gap between the material and non-material is transcended and the location of spiritual truth is identified as beyond that which can be rationalised empirically or corporeally. Therefore, practices such as prayer and meditation are encouraged to allow the learner to enter this spiritual dimension.

For existential scholars, the situation is reversed. As the ontological supposition is of connectedness, there is no need for overcoming. As noted above, the theory of 'relational consciousness' prioritises the child's innate spiritual sensibilities (Hay and Nye, 2006: 114) to

inspire a 'new dimension of understanding, meaning and experience' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 109). This begins with the self. For other scholars such as Hyde, spiritual understanding is self-constructed and is posited in contrast to forms of learning that require a transformation of mind and soul. Being is brought to, and is integral within, the learning process (Hyde, 2008: 74).

Whilst the notion of ontology as recognised above is important in this second paradigm, Heidegger throws more light on this philosophically and identifies how Being cannot be fully understood or drawn into learning until the question of its meaning is asked. He writes: 'To work out the question of Being adequately, we must make an entity, the inquirer, transparent in his own Being' (Heidegger, 1962: 27). This concerns the authenticity of the learner. The question of Being then begins with the entity who has Being (Heidegger, 1962: 25). Inquiry into Being is the behaviour of the questioner who has his or her own character of Being. *Dasein* is the way in which Being is accessible to the learner and is the possibility of what he or she can become. As potentiality-for-Being, it is also the possibility of the outcome of questioning. As stated above, it expresses the possibilities that issue from its essential state. The Being of the learner is both the possibility of the question which is the meaning of the Being of existence and of the outcome which is the possibility this affords.

In educational terms, the teacher not only creates the conditions in which the individual's *Dasein* allows for existential inquiry but also promotes the possibility of truths that shape the beliefs and values that he or she comes to live by. The answer to the question of the meaning of Being is the Being of that individual in his or her own potentiality. As learning inspired by *Dasein* pertains to Being, it negates the need for external authority figures; in fact, these figures are considered an infringement on the individual's rights to autonomy and voice (Hyde, 2008: 120). This notion is problematic for Christian spiritual education and a consideration of concerns will be outlined later in this chapter.

The idea of the self-construction of truth is reflected in Jane Erricker's contribution to Erricker and Erricker's co-authored text. Here she posits that true knowledge is not something 'out there' but a personal narrative gained 'as a result of the stories we tell ourselves about our experiences' (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 108). To that end pedagogy should not be a process that is enforced onto learners but one that is defined by themselves. As her argument is that in spiritual and moral development there is no 'end' point, it can only be the self in relation with the self of others that can uncover and construct spiritual truth (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 110-11). This relationship is similar to that described by Heidegger as 'Being-in-the-

world' (Heidegger, 1962: 78). 'In' does not concern a relation of proximity (Heidegger, 1962: 79) but an existential state of encounter. As self and other are not 'alongside' each other ontically but 'in-the-world' together existentially, there are no borders and consequently no separation. Potentiality-for-Being is constantly outstanding (Heidegger, 1962: 373) and as learner and meaning are never clarified it pertains to the issue of the 'not yet.'

Jane Erricker proposes the idea that spiritual education should allow individuals to construct their own biographies in an open-ended way. Her method of 'narrative involvement' pertains to reflexivity, thinking and expressing oneself in the light of moral rules or imperatives (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 139). Meaning which is made in the light of experience is never completed. Thus 'others' (or 'the they') can never have the upper hand. This idea of incompleteness in learning, as well as the nature of the learner, is reflected in Heidegger's notion of 'care.'

1.6 Care

From its essence and acknowledging Being-in-the-world as its basic state, *Dasein's* Being is revealed authentically through 'care.' It might be suggested that care is the form of *Dasein* that reveals who a person is. However, it is not 'reality' as Hyde suggests nor does it reflect any representation of *Dasein* made manifest externally. Heidegger writes that care is that which possesses the shape of 'man'⁷⁶ (Heidegger, 1962: 241) and 'that to which human *Dasein* belongs for its lifetime' (Heidegger, 1962: 243).

In care, the learner has potentiality for the sake of *Dasein* as it is. But it is also self- projective and when *Dasein* is described as being 'ahead of itself in care,' the individual becomes Being towards his or her own potentiality-for-Being (Heidegger, 1962: 236). Again, this does not reflect a determinate entity but in this case it is possibility *a priori*; that is, it is embraced as possibility before the recognition of its projected self. Furthermore, as a totality it is ahead-of-itself-in-Being-already-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962: 237). The thrown projection of man in care might be considered to represent the learner who is 'I'; nevertheless, this expression of self is not an inauthentic representation of one who has 'fallen' but one whose *Dasein* is authentically ahead of itself.

Care is also the existential-ontological condition of the self which is free for authentic existential possibilities. It is the self that is constantly in a state of 'not yet' and this underlies

⁷⁶ The specific designation of gender reflects Heideggerian usage rather than any priority on the part of the current author.

all actions and phenomena, both pertaining to learning and personal growth. *Dasein* is constantly outstanding therefore sustained in its own temporality it concerns 'becoming' (as a continuous verb) rather than a fulfilling of the present (or what one *becomes*). It is always already ahead of itself. In fact, it is only death that makes *Dasein* manifest in its own self. In Being-towards-death, this possibility discloses to *Dasein* its ultimate potentiality (Heidegger, 1962: 374).

When *Dasein* reveals itself as care, disclosure occurs. Disclosure is also described as *Dasein* being 'cleared,' in which Being becomes an issue for the entity in its 'there.' In care, *Dasein* is disclosed to its own authentic Being and becomes available to itself. In so doing it 'breaks down the disguises which bar *Dasein's* own Being' and draws on its own pre-ontological way of interpreting Being (Heidegger, 1962: 168). Thus, the disclosure represents an authentic expression of *Dasein*. Authentic disclosure is also described as 'resoluteness' which is the truth of *Dasein* (Heidegger, 1962: 343). In this respect it equates with freedom. *Dasein* 'frees itself for its world' and so is allowed to become its own potentiality-for-Being; it also allows others to realise their potential which is co-disclosed primordially (Heidegger, 1962: 344). *Dasein* projects itself upon possibilities into which it has been thrown. Being 'resolute' avoids 'falling' into 'the they' and while such disclosedness cannot avoid 'actuality,' it ensures that *Dasein* discloses what is factually possible (Heidegger, 1962: 346).

Disclosure reveals entities as discovered already: entities here refer to both the learner and learning who are simultaneously in existence. What is disclosed is what is learnt through the existence of the learner. This then introduces the notion of temporality to Being. Authentic disclosedness challenges the way in which the 'world' (or knowledge) is discovered. Care is always ahead of itself Being already in, and Being alongside. But when care is disclosed, this is *Dasein* as it has been. Having been does not mean 'before,' but when *Dasein* is projected, or revealed, existentially it is 'as it is' having been already revealed (Heidegger, 1962: 376).

Dasein is ahead of itself in care. It is free to be projected upon objects of concern (the everyday), to be made present and encountered ready-to-hand. Resoluteness, which is the truth of *Dasein*, prevents *Dasein* from 'falling;' it brings *Dasein* which was ahead of itself in care back into its own potentiality-for-Being. Therefore, it is ahead of itself projected but also having been, comes back to its *a priori* state to ensure that care is authentic. This coming back is described as a 'coming-towards-onself out of the current possibility as which one's *Dasein* exists' (Heidegger, 1962: 385). Resoluteness brings *Dasein* back from 'falling' into an authentic

expression of how it is revealed in its 'there' (Heidegger, 1962: 375). It concerns not the 'now' of the present but is constantly concerned with its own potentiality.

As intimated above, care is also concerned with anticipatory resoluteness which is *Dasein's* Being-towards-its-end. Only in death is resoluteness the authentic disclosure of what it can become (Heidegger, 1962: 353). Therefore, *Dasein's* primordial potentiality-for-Being is Being-towards-death, and existence involves the anticipation of this absolute resoluteness. Death is the only absolute, the only certainty: the possibility of the impossibility of existence (Heidegger, 1962: 354). In death, resoluteness discloses the truth of existence. As will be examined in due course, this for Heidegger was an essential belief, which also reveals the darker side of his philosophy in which mastery is made manifest as ultimacy.⁷⁷

'Care' clarifies the difference between Hyde's view of reality and Heidegger's view of existence, suggesting what the roles of learner and educator might entail. When the starting point is 'I', and 'I' is taken to be an entity, it is to 'presuppose too little' (Heidegger, 1962: 363) about Being. On the other hand, when the starting point is existence and the understanding is *Dasein* itself, existentially learning and *Dasein* are never kept apart. Therefore, there can be no presupposition of reality. Throughout the whole learning process existence is present, ahead of itself in care and Being-towards its ultimate potentiality in death. 'Care is therefore the condition for the possibility of an existential potentiality-for-Being' (Heidegger, 1962: 365). The educator's task is to provide this condition.

Within Paradigm Two an example of how this might be put into practice is illustrated by Daniel Scott, for whom spiritual education pertains to the ambiguous, uncertain and complex. Like Erricker and Erricker, Tacey, Hart and Hyde, he favours de-centring in order for spirituality to be open and flexible (Scott, 2001: 120). Drawing on the potentiality of the lives of learners and using narrative as a method of allowing for their spiritual expressions, he illustrates how educators can provide an 'indeterminate' and 'open' space for 'voicing lived experience which is not dependent on external evidence or objective detail' (Scott, 2001: 120). Proposing that the unencompassed (possible) remains unencompassed, teachers are warned against making their own judgements on learning (Scott, 2001: 112). Instead he proposes that each should

⁷⁷ This is reflected in the suggestion of Heidegger's commitment to the Nazi party between 1933 and 1945 and his view of the resoluteness of *Dasein* being illustrated in the quest for the freedom of the German 'volk' (Tubbs, 2005: 134-5) through the death of the other.

allow for an understanding which is 'mutually evolving,' being willing to 'attend to something in its own right' (Scott, 2001: 127).

This is reflected by Tubbs who in Heideggerian terms, suggests that authentic care takes place when the educator allows the learner to develop his or her existential potentiality-for-Being. Tubbs suggests that the spiritual educator's role is 'not to fill students with knowledge but to let them learn, and most importantly, to let them learn learning itself' (Tubbs, 2005: 132). For pedagogy, this considers allowing for the autonomy of the spiritual learner for whom meaning is intrinsically determined, as well as acknowledging the provisionality and potentiality of all knowledge. The spiritual teacher allows for the uncovering of *Dasein* and provides the conditions in which learning can take place authentically as care. Care comes into its own when both teacher and learner devote themselves to learning determined by their own *Dasein* (Tubbs, 2005: 133). The spiritual teacher consequently inspires freedom.

1.7 Critique

In Heidegger's philosophy, education is decentralised. His notion of Being-in-the-world ensures that learning is local, organic and located within the self. His pedagogy of care ensures that the learning process is ongoing, fluid and provisional (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 109-13), and this allows for potentiality-for Being. Therefore, Being is never separated from learning and education takes place 'from the ground up' (Copsey, 2005: title page). As has already been indicated, resonances can be identified with certain perspectives within Paradigm Two, in which scholars prioritise the learner in learning and allow for personal meanings to be made.

However, it might be argued that problems become evident when scholars adopt Heideggerian concepts to frame pedagogy. As noted at the outset, when scholars' applications of these concepts are not fully understood or indeed authentic to the Heideggerian ideals of *Dasein* and care, difficulties occur. Heidegger's philosophy as presented in *Being and Time* is extremely complex. Without an understanding of the whole thesis, it is easy to take ideas out of context and thus offer them in error. Furthermore, as highlighted earlier by Tubbs (Tubbs, 2005: 132), being attractive to teachers and scholars who aim to evade a totalising perspective in education, it is easy to adopt aspects of Heidegger's theory to support one's own argument. In the critique that follows, concerns regarding the Heideggerian influence on perspectives in Paradigm Two are highlighted, not least the proposed misrecognition of this

philosophy by scholars and the perceived error of positing such an existential perspective as a priority.

In the Literature Review it was identified how Hay and Nye make reference to Heidegger in order to identify the *a priori* nature of spirituality in accordance with their own work.⁷⁸ In *The Spirit of the Child*, they highlight how spiritual learning is primordial, prior to both the 'discursive intellect' and to 'the disclosure that we are already immersed in Being' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 134). These points highlight the assumption that spirituality is 'prior to' other aspects of a learner's life and as such suggest a progression from the state of Being to an awareness of spirituality that thus inspires spiritual knowledge. According to Hay and Nye, this spiritual knowledge, albeit often corporeal or non-cognitive, is the outcome of an education grounded in Being (Hay and Nye, 2006: 134). However, it might be suggested that this process is also resonant of the 'coming to know' that Heidegger aims to avoid. As highlighted above, even intuitive knowledge is deemed inauthentic by Heidegger, thus inspiring the need for an existential perspective,⁷⁹ and as his philosophy does not anticipate any outcome, the results of spiritual development pertain to the 'reality' that is closed to possibility and is 'ready to hand' (Heidegger, 1962: 225).

Furthermore, Hay and Nye do not outline what they mean by Being or indeed describe Heidegger's existential phenomenology in their text. Neither do they recognise that *Dasein* is pre-ontological and therefore requires an inquiry into the meaning of Being before any consideration of learning is made. Their progression acknowledges Being's essential state, but fails to recognise that knowledge is always and already manifest in its potentiality-for-Being (Heidegger, 1962: 33), rather than the result of the disclosure of Being. For Hay and Nye then, there is a telos. For Heidegger however, there is no progression 'from' and 'to' and subsequently there are no outcomes.⁸⁰ It might be suggested that to promote such a progression as posited in *The Spirit of the Child* is to lead the learner into 'falling' and therefore inauthenticity.

Hay and Nye also misrecognise disclosure. In Heideggerian philosophy the disclosure of care does not involve the revealing of spiritual 'knowledge' that has already involved Being: to reveal would also lead *Dasein* to inauthenticity. Here, knowledge lies in the realm of

⁷⁸ See page 34.

⁷⁹ See pages 48-9.

⁸⁰ See page 48.

representation⁸¹ and therefore error. It is the disclosure of the Being of the learner that is itself the truth. In care, *Dasein* is disclosed to its own authentic Being and becomes available to itself (Heidegger, 1962: 168). To be authentic to this phenomenological philosophy then, the scholar must work backwards to locate the manner of Being that is the Being of the learner and forwards to identify how this manner as the potentiality for learning manifests itself as learning as possibility, not knowledge. The disclosure of *Dasein*, ahead of itself in care does not pertain to an uncovering of what is already there in order to be disclosed as meaningful learning. Rather, learning as the disclosure of *Dasein* is Being.

Whilst the difference between Heidegger's philosophy of Being and the notion promoted by Hay and Nye is subtle, it is no less significant. As cited above, for Heidegger there is no 'other.' *Dasein* is both Being and potentiality-for-Being. In the backwards and forwards movement of potentiality and care, the priority of Being eradicates the need for anyone or anything from whom it is existentially separate. Hence, the significance of the learning environment is minimised, as are both the roles of the teacher and the religious context in which learning occurs. As knowledge that is inspired by 'the they' pertains to all that is standardised and equal (Heidegger, 1962: 165),⁸² it is clear that in adopting an Heideggerian pedagogical perspective, educators must refrain from any intervention, and likewise direct learners away from embracing truths that are commonly presented and agreed.

Furthermore, when disclosure reveals the simultaneous existence of both the learning and the learner, and therefore considers any represented knowledge to be in error, the aim of nurturing a spiritual life of faith as considered in this thesis, is irrelevant. As suggested by Hyde in the *Annual Godly Play annual lecture* (2013), in such a situation only the learners know what is being unfolded to them through spiritual experience: it is not for the teacher to find out. Yet if one is to apply this perspective to Christian education, this idea renders it impossible for educators to recognise the development of faith in learner's personal lives and raises the question of what such learning is for.⁸³

It might be argued then, that in the application of Heideggerian perspectives to their own thesis, Hay and Nye misrecognise this existential philosophy; as such their promotion of a spiritual pedagogy founded on Being is groundless. One might question in fact whether they intend to promote a perspective of education that has no external demonstration (as their

⁸¹ Representation is explored more fully in Chapter Four.

⁸² See page 52.

⁸³ This critical point for faith development is considered in more depth in Chapter Five.

thesis is drawn from the verbal responses of children) and it must be considered whether the disclosure of Being can actually contribute to authentic spiritual learning. It must also be considered how such Heideggerian perspectives have value for church leaders and learning individuals exploring faith, and particularly in avoiding falling into inauthenticity, one must ask if eschewing the influence of 'the they' is appropriate or indeed ethical.

Each of the questions posed above highlight the necessity of scholars and educators in Paradigm Two to think more intentionally about the implications of applying an existential perspective in Christian spiritual pedagogy. They also highlight again the need for a new perspective that is aware of the risk. This idea will be explored in chapters that follow, particularly in terms of the notions of faith and learning. Whilst a pedagogical perspective of possibility is attractive to the more experiential scholar and practitioner, the implication of the loss of 'other' for authenticity must also be re-considered; hence the following chapter will consider the relationship between the learner and learning as well as the learner and various contexts of 'other.' Material pertaining to Kierkegaardian philosophy will also address this, signposting wider conclusions that re-define the relation of self and other in learning, as well as this relation in relation to the absolute.⁸⁴

A second example of misrecognition is noted in the writing of Australian scholar Wynn Moriarty. As a teacher of religious education and student in the arena of children's spirituality, Moriarty draws on Heidegger to support her claim that learning equates to Being. She purports that for this philosopher, Being equates to self-realisation: a reflection on 'what it means to be me' (Moriarty, 2014: 19). She also refers to the self as a continuing identity who is 'I' and that it is this 'I' who is at the centre of spiritual development. This 'I' is a subjective learning self. However, again it might be argued that she misrecognises both the role and nature of the learner and as such places a definition on Being. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter,⁸⁵ Heidegger's writing was positioned in response to philosophers who claimed the truth of subjectivity; he aimed to avoid definition. In his philosophy, the nature of Being must be understood before the learner can be considered as 'I' (Heidegger, 1962: 72) and this inquiry is missing from Moriarty's proposition.

Also, whilst understanding the learner to be a continuing identity in a state of 'not yet,' Moriarty identifies the student as he or she who is self-sufficient⁸⁶ and through the disclosure

⁸⁴ This material occurs for example in Chapter Five.

⁸⁵ See pages 48-9.

⁸⁶ Self-sufficiency is explored further in Chapter Three.

of self, attains self-realisation. However, this is again antithetical to Heidegger's premise of possibility. Rather, the essence of *Dasein* is the possibility of its 'Being-to-be' (Heidegger, 1962: 33) and this avoids definition or any form of conclusion. Whilst being an expression of one's Being in possibility, *Dasein*, does not equate to identity, not least the concept of 'I.' What is disclosed in care is not a determinate entity representing the individual who learns, but the Being who is the meaning of Being. This individual is his or her own potentiality-for-Being. Without any inquiry into the meaning of the Being of the learner, and how this is made manifest ahead of itself in care, one limits the understanding of oneself as the learner and in turn the possibility of what can be learnt.

Additionally, Moriarty's idea of placing the student in the centre of learning actually separates the learner from learning. The 'I' who learns is involved in spiritual development but this 'I' is not the projection of *Dasein*, but the self-that, through definition, has fallen. Heidegger's learner, who is potentiality-for-Being, is also the potentiality of what is learnt. Learning and the learner are the same. What is disclosed in learning is what is learnt through the existence of the learner. As Moriarty's notion of spiritual development also suggests learning as a progression rather than the disclosure of Being, she again does not provide an authentic or full understanding of care. Continually in a state of potentiality-for-Being, Heidegger's *Dasein* has no proposed telos. The only realisation of *Dasein* comes at the point of death.⁸⁷

Learning through existence it might be argued then, promotes a perspective that serves to validate itself. To that end, there is again no need for 'other' and the individual who authentically learns, avoids falling into the influence of 'the they.' It must again be asked if such a perspective is appropriate for Christian education. As suggested in the introduction to this thesis, the aim of the current discussion is to explore a new perspective that is authentic to both the learning individual and the Christian faith; as an active Catholic practitioner, one must wonder if Moriarty actually intends to exclude the influence of the religious tradition in the way that Heidegger's philosophy implies, and one must consider the implications for students and teachers who do adopt these suggestions.

Finally, misrecognition is also illustrated by Brendan Hyde. The way in which he misrecognises Heidegger's thesis is in his equation of essence 'as it is' (Heidegger, 1962: 37) with the 'here and now' of experience (Hyde, 2008: 52). For Hyde, essence equates to immediacy and in his text *Children and Spirituality* (2008), he suggests that this pertains to immediate bodily

⁸⁷ See page 58.

experiences that bypass the intellect and thus inspire spiritual awareness. Spiritual awareness inspires personal reflections that lead to the creation of meanings made in the light of the experience. To illustrate this, he presents a series of vignettes that describe ordinary experiences that might be considered to have spiritual value.⁸⁸ Hyde suggests that each experience such as play, showing empathy and asking questions, heightens the individual's awareness of the affective dimension of Being and thus contributes to spiritual learning (Hyde, 2008: 13-4).

However, corporeal awareness is no consideration for Heidegger.⁸⁹ His philosophy is more concerned with possibility and with essence as the pre-ontological state of Being that is the inspiration for *Dasein*. As stated above, essence is the starting point for the inquiry into the meaning of Being and forms the basis for all ontologies and as such, existential education; however, it has no definition. Whilst the participants in Hyde's activities become more aware of themselves as the potentiality for spiritual learning, this awareness again includes an understanding of the self as a subjective entity. For Hyde, the immediate experience is an entity 'in itself.' It is personal and has meaning only to the individual. However, meaning making based on this experience pertains to the inauthentic disclosure of the entity that is subsequently self-realised and thus defined. In Heideggerian terms, anything in-itself limits possibility.⁹⁰ Whilst essence is an undefined and unmediated state of Being, as will be explained later, the 'in itself' actually pertains to objectivity. It might be argued then that in his misrecognition of Heidegger, Hyde promotes a view of learning and truth that he in fact aims to avoid.

Additionally, as highlighted in the article 'Beyond relation: a critical exploration of 'relational consciousness for spiritual education' (Wills, 2012: 50-60), published in the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, the notion of immediacy is problematic for existential education. Spiritual immediacy suggests an immediate relation between the individual and the experience encountered in the learning environment. However, as the self-realised individual is separated from the experience in order to reflect on it, it is no longer immediate but mediate, pertaining to representation, and as will be explored in Chapter Two, illusory truth (Wills, 2012: 54). In this case, Hyde's presentation of an Heideggerian perspective is also illusory and must be considered critically. In exploring a new perspective of Christian

⁸⁸One example is the story of a child being 'in the moment' as he plays on a swing.

⁸⁹ See pages 51-2.

⁹⁰ See pages 51-2.

education, it is highlighted here that the critical issues raised in this chapter signpost further philosophical investigation and the role of mediation in learning is considered in Chapter Two.

In the light of the critique above, it is argued then that Christian educators must be cautious when encouraging the promotion of personal reflections on experiences and deeming them to be true. These truths, whilst being created by learning individuals in the context of real life, are considered as truth 'in-itself.' For the current thesis, this is problematic. In misrecognising Heidegger's thesis, Hay and Nye, Moriarty and Hyde promote perspectives that undervalue the Christian tradition and are thus at a tangent to the aim of inspiring a life of faith within this tradition. It is the conjecture here that such misrecognition and the lack of criticality regarding these views in available literature puts learning as well as the learner in Christian education at risk of becoming its own truth. It is suggested that to draw on such a philosophical rationale to support an existential perspective in learning without undergoing a full and critical exegesis of concepts is both inadequate and problematic.

For example, problems arise concerning agency and personalised meaning-making. Introduced in the Literature Review and reflected in Moriarty's claim presented above, agency inspires individuals to become the directors of their own learning. In Heideggerian terms, the potentiality of *Dasein* opens up the possibility of all ontologies, and in evading the 'falling' that results from representation, the Being of the learner is disclosed as the authentic meaning of Being. The role of the educator then is not to teach but to provide the conditions for this disclosure. As identified above, there is no relation of self and other, and as such personal learning is self-validated.

The problem with this is that self-validated meanings, such as those also encouraged by Erricker and Erricker as well as Hyde, Nye and Privett, are groundless. The foundation of belief within the Christian religious tradition is eluded leaving personal truths deficient of any moral or doctrinal framework. Whilst one's Being is intrinsic to the process of coming to truth, it must be acknowledged that for Heidegger, Being *is* the truth. Being therefore potentially allows for the acceptance of meanings that might be unethical. The potentiality of *Dasein*, when having chosen authenticity, allows for creative possibility. However, without an agreed moral code or framework for right decision making, one might question by what criteria something is determined as 'right.' If creative possibility allows for a learner to determine

meaning that is for example against British Values,⁹¹ or from a Biblical perspective the Ten Commandments,⁹² implicit within this is the potential to cause both good and harm. If anything is possible, then the possible can become anything.

Another problem concerns the evasion of thought. Hay and Nye, Moriarty and Hyde all promote a pedagogical perspective that prioritises non-cognitive spiritual awareness rather than the acceptance and application of agreed truths such as 'The Four Points' presented in the Literature Review.⁹³ As will be outlined in Chapter Two, freeing itself from thought, including the evasion of dogma and tradition, self-validated truth in turn creates its own truth. Furthermore, eschewing thought consciousness has the potential to inspire learning that is nebulous and unclear and this again being groundless has the potential to promote ambiguity, uncertainty and insecurity.

Tubbs reminds his readers that by eschewing the role of thought of consciousness in favour of the more authentic *Dasein*, Heidegger placed the meaning of Being within its own Being and its own time. This perceived authenticity was allowed to establish itself in opposition to those deemed to be inauthentic, and this is reported to have had unethical consequences.⁹⁴ This illustration reveals the horror of the error of spirit being the Being of the question and the question of the Being (Tubbs, 2005: 135). Therefore, there must be a framework to keep this in check and at this stage of the thesis, this perceived error highlights the need for a perspective that acknowledges a middle space between the learning self and religious or moral frameworks.

The middle space highlights the relation of the learner to the contingent influences such as history and tradition deemed by Heidegger as 'the they' and accords them educational

⁹¹ 'British Values' is a term used in schools in England and Wales to define behaviours of tolerance and acceptance. The values are: democracy; the rule of law. individual liberty; mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith. www.doingsmsc.org.uk/british-values/ accessed on 11/10/16.

⁹² See Exodus 20.

⁹³ See page 16.

⁹⁴ An argument exists that equates Heidegger's notion of the freedom of Being with support for National Socialism in Germany in 1933-45. In his text 'Martin Heidegger: A Political Life' (Ott, 1993), Hugo Ott suggests that Heidegger's ideas that 'the beginning continues to be' and that Being is revealed in its origins, validated the movement of 'inner truth and greatness' brought about by the rise of National Socialism in the period up to and including World War Two (Ott, 1993: 22). The notion of that essence of truth determined from the beginning was disclosed as the inevitable truth of this new era justified the claim to authenticity and whilst the activities of this movement are now vilified, it is claimed that Heidegger considered this disclosure to be a sense of humanity 'emerging into a new reality' (Ott, 1993: 23-5).

significance. Therefore, and as will be explored in due course, it might be suggested that it is relation, rather than Being, that is the starting point for a perspective in Christian education that inspires an authentic life of faith. As indicated again in the article 'Beyond relation,' it must be considered that thought consciousness, in the middle space, cannot be avoided in the construction of meaning. As such, the mediation that Heidegger considers leads to error,⁹⁵ comes to have an educative role (Wills, 2012: 55). Although experiential aspects of learning seek to transcend thinking, thought consciousness will always play a part in all forms of learning and as such must now be embraced.

1.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, whilst Heidegger's philosophy overturned epistemological tables and considered the gap between learner and learning to be obsolete, it is proposed that for a perspective of Christian education that aims to inspire authentic faith, this is a problem. It is argued here that to adopt an Heideggerian perspective, as have a number of scholars in Paradigm Two, is actually an error. However, the critique above recognises several pedagogical principles that whilst not necessarily existential in the Heideggerian sense, highlight aspects of learning that are significant.

For example, Hay and Nye, Moriarty and Hyde all present learning as a progression that from Being to an awareness of spirituality, stimulates the creation of spiritual knowledge inspired by reflection on experience. This reflection, which acknowledges the separation of the learner and learning, includes Being as the potentiality of learning but also draws on the contingent influences provided by the external world, including wider society and culture.⁹⁶ This separation does not promote the dualistic positing critiqued in the Literature Review; rather it concerns the diremption that considers the self to be in a dialectic relation with 'other' and facilitates the opening up of the middle space within which mediation takes place. As suggested above, mediation here does not inspire the creation of truth as error, but allows for a dynamic learning relationship of self and 'other' to be identified. The progression also suggests learning to be an intentional movement. Within this movement there is a telos; the telos of the current thesis is the promotion of an authentic life of faith.

These points presented above are all resonant of an Hegelian philosophical perspective. Whilst Hegel's 'system' has already been highlighted as one example of the philosophers of

⁹⁵ See page 52.

⁹⁶ See Hyde, 2008: 51.

thought that Heidegger sought to oppose, his phenomenology represents a movement of learning that not only acknowledges the significance of 'other' but in fact considers the self to be in 'other.' Hegel also presents a different view regarding error and deeming the positing of both objective and subjective truth to be error (or illusion), his philosophy highlights the necessity of an individual recognising the illusion of the illusion. Therefore, the significance of Hegel's work for this thesis is in its view of relation and in turn the idea of the middle space. As Hegel presents the idea that there exists a third or middle way in which the other is critically acknowledged, the gap between self and other is recognised as the locus of authentic learning and this as such renders the existential perspective inadequate.

In the following chapter, an exploration of Hegel's dialectical view of learning assesses how relation is important in the consideration of a pedagogical process; in the journey towards absolute knowledge, the discussion re-evaluates not only the relation of the individual with the Christian tradition, but also highlights the significance of the relations between the learner and teacher, the learner and the learning context, as well as the learner and learning.

CHAPTER TWO: SELF AND OTHER

2.1 Introduction

This chapter, which draws on Hegelian philosophy, presents a deeper assessment of the problems raised at the end of Chapter One and considers in more detail the nature of the relation of self and other.⁹⁷ The perspectives presented here draw on a very different philosophical system to the one outlined above. Whilst Hegel's system is included amongst those Heidegger was working against, the elements of Hegelian philosophy identified in this chapter serve to continue to problematize not only a pedagogy of possibility, but also the dualistic positing that inevitably occurs when any context or tradition is negated.

Most notably through Hegel's text *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel, 1977), the significance of relation for education is considered. An engagement with this text frames a more detailed analysis of the status of self and other in each of the paradigms introduced in the Literature Review; within this analysis, the discussion explores the nature of both objectivity and subjectivity in learning and highlights the significance of their relation in 'coming to know.'⁹⁸ This chapter also features further philosophical reflection on themes already introduced. These include illusion⁹⁹ and misrecognition,¹⁰⁰ immediacy¹⁰¹ and mastery.¹⁰² Considering the nature of knowledge and the issues that arise when considering learning as a process,¹⁰³ the thesis also considers the importance of the middle space. Finally, it is acknowledged contra Heidegger, that when located within this middle space, contingency and mediation become significant factors that contribute to a challenging and life giving process of education that, one could argue, pertains more fully to authenticity.

⁹⁷ In this chapter, the word 'other' will not be marked by punctuation. In Chapter One, the use of inverted commas indicated the marking out of those who, for scholars in Paradigm Two, do not represent an authentic expression of spiritual Being. In Chapter Two, self and other are considered equally, therefore do not need further demarcation.

⁹⁸ The phrase 'coming to know' suggests a process of education that results in represented knowledge. Having identified that it is resonant of the term 'coming to faith' (see page 16), it is noted here how Heideggerian philosophy is antithetical to such a process. In Chapters Four onwards this term will be used more frequently, particularly in exploring faith as a movement and considering the nature of knowledge in this dynamic process of learning.

⁹⁹ See page 39.

¹⁰⁰ See pages 60-4.

¹⁰¹ See page 64.

¹⁰² See page 23.

¹⁰³ This reflects the progress of learning intimated in the writings of Hay and Nye, Moriarty and Hyde, as outlined at the end of Chapter One.

An historical introduction to Hegel's work sets the scene for an exegesis of his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807;1997), and highlighting the significance of Hegelian philosophy to the current thesis, this chapter identifies key themes for learning. It is important to note however that the new perspective of Christian education proposed here is not Hegelian per se. The themes addressed in this chapter continue to critique the perspectives of Paradigms One and Two. Signposts to later chapters are also presented, and these contribute to the further exploration of the nature and roles of self, other and relation in Christian education. In addition to each of the paradigms indicated, self and other are considered here primarily in terms of the learner and learning, including the relation of the learner with 'God' and each of these relations are considered in terms of the relation of relation.

2.2 Background

Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* was first published in 1807. It was considered a 'voyage of discovery' (Hyppolite, 1974: 3) that along with the text *Logic* (Hegel, 1830; 1975), presented his system of mind. In this system, sense-consciousness, otherwise described as the 'obvious content' of immediate knowledge (Findlay, 1977: vi), progresses from its essential beginning, through a recurring stream of events, towards the ultimate telos that is absolute knowledge (Findlay, 1977: v). This thought-advance involves the dialectical movement of two forms of self-consciousness; more complex than the progression highlighted at the end of Chapter One,¹⁰⁴ the events of self-consciousness that lead to absolute knowledge include the loss of self to other and the subsequent return to self. Here thought is continually put to work and through the movements of negation, mediation and return, each mode of self-consciousness undergoes philosophical scrutiny within a cyclic system.

Through the presentation of a number of shapes and scenarios, this system outlines how one learns. Sense-certainty, perception, understanding, reason, ethics, religion and art are all examples of the different scenarios and each is considered in turn. As following negation each partner returns to the self, consciousness proceeds to the next scenario and the process continues. Ultimately, 'through a completed experience of itself,' and the awareness of what self-consciousness 'really is in itself' (Hegel, 1977: 49), the learner comes to absolute knowledge. It is important to note that whilst aspects of the *Phenomenology* might seem repetitive, this in fact represents the cyclic process. Here the events of negation and return

¹⁰⁴ See page 60.

are considered repeatedly, each time outworked in different terms and contexts, until knowledge is finally understood as absolute.

Unlike that of Heidegger, Hegel's educational process embraces separation: that is, it exemplifies the diremption of self-consciousness into self and other. However, it is not dualistic. As will be outlined shortly, Hegel's ideas indeed consider dualism to be both illusion and error. The view of self and other as essential entities is also considered illusory. Rather than prioritising each mode of self-consciousness as an entity in-itself, the dialectic framework allows each to understand the truth of self only in terms of the other.

The dialectical nature of Hegel's system places it opposite the view prevalent in Western philosophy at the time, that truth is separate from thought. For example, Hegel counteracts the Kantian concern that considers cognition as independent knowledge. According to Kant, any representations or appearances of such knowledge are contingent on sensible intuition (Kant, 1997: 178). Thus, objects of truth when apprehended in space and time, are only objects as they appear to the learner (Kant, 1997: 177); therefore, the reality of the object is only real as much as it is represented in consciousness. This view suggests that what is to be known exists prior to one's learning of it. Here an object of truth is unconditional: it is devoid of content or knowledge and as an entity in itself, is unattainable by human cognition. As the identity of the thinking individual represents the negation of objective truth, subjectivity is thus perceived as illusory. As well as making a distinction between the learner and the content of learning, it is held that truth gained through experience is in fact an error (Tubbs, 2009: 120).

The implication for Christian education is that metaphysical cognitions such as God, freedom and immortality exist beyond the sensible world; therefore, what can be taught or learnt regarding these is limited to what reason is able to grasp. This pertains to both reductionism and illusion. As well as being an illusion of objective truth, sensible intuition in consciousness can also deem the object in-itself illusory (Kant, 1997: 183). Hence, representation of truth incites error; in that respect, representations of God as presented for example through the Four Points of Paradigm One,¹⁰⁵ are also illusory, therefore in error.

In *Logic*, Hegel's educational process locates truth within rather than external to consciousness (Hegel, 1975: 4). As such, the absolute is not beyond knowledge but is 'self-knowledge in the knowledge of consciousness' (Hegel, 1975: 7). What is known as a result of

¹⁰⁵ See page 16.

learning is mediated in what is experienced. Knowledge can no longer be considered as objective truth in-itself but only true in its relationship with other (Tubbs, 2008: 2).¹⁰⁶ Albeit within consciousness, Hegel also posits pure subjectivity as illusory. As the *Phenomenology* ensures the recognition of illusion through illusion, illusion is not deemed negative as in the Kantian sense: through the dialectic, thought can learn about itself through its own illusion of itself. Therefore, it might be proposed that learners might accept the critical partnership of illusory truth and thought in order to identify a new way to learn. Explored in more detail later in this chapter, this idea illuminates the significance of the current thesis, and considers how a new perspective of Christian education might embrace the notion of illusion as a pedagogical tool.

In addition to Kantian philosophy, the dialectical nature of Hegel's system places it at odds with the perspectives of scholars in Paradigm Two. As already noted, the telos of Hegel's system is the absolute knowledge that evidences the absolute recognition of each mode of self-consciousness as complete in the other. However, this telos does not lead to unification; it therefore cannot be equated (for example) with the view of Australian educator Marian de Souza, introduced above,¹⁰⁷ for whom the telos of spiritual education is ultimate unity (de Souza, Cartwright and McGilp, 2004: 170). de Souza et al promote the idea that spiritual development might be represented as a continuum, inspired by everyday experiences and continuing towards ultimate unity with 'Other.' She describes such unity as the ability of an individual 'to identify with and feel as one with the Other in Community, in Creation and the Cosmos, and perhaps with a Transcendent Other' (de Souza, Cartwright and McGilp, 2004: 170). As stated above, this might concern the unity of learning and the learner, including the relation of the learner and 'God.' However, for Hegel this suggestion is implausible; there must be a middle space. It is what is 'between' partners that has value for learners.

As subjectivity is opposed by Heidegger,¹⁰⁸ no expression of self or 'other' that is recognised as an entity in-itself can be acknowledged as authentic. However, Heidegger does not negate a sense of otherness; his sense of otherness is part of the clearing of Being that is Being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962: 78-80). In existential philosophy, expressions of *Dasein* and relations that incite separation from essence are considered to contribute to 'falling' into inauthenticity; yet within the realm of Being-in-the-world, the open-ness of Being (Heidegger,

¹⁰⁶ Examples of 'other' might include the tradition or the teacher, or as purported by Hay and Nye's theory of relational consciousness, the categories of world and other people (Hay and Nye, 2006: 116).

¹⁰⁷ See page 28.

¹⁰⁸ See page 48.

1978: 252) that exists before the disclosure of *Dasein*, allows for the Being-alongside of the *Dasein* of others. This means that self and others can correspond. This of course is not the ultimate unity of Marian de Souza, but it does signify that in the open-ness of Being, there are no boundaries between entities.¹¹⁰ The open-ness is more a spiritual resonance than a relation, and might be considered reflective of Martin Buber's notion of I-Thou (Buber, 1970),¹¹¹ or the four categories of 'relational consciousness' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 109).¹¹²

Nevertheless, Hegel is explicit that his phenomenology is not ontological or even pre-ontological. There is no Being without relation: anything that exists without relation is 'reduced to vacuity' (Hegel, 1977: 9). Therefore, to claim that learning and the learner are one, is an error (Hegel, 1977: 14-5). Rather, Hegel's interest is in the individual's relation with the object of knowledge as a universal; in a bid to move beyond self-sufficiency and individualism, he transcends subjectivity. In this way, he avoids limiting authenticity in learning to what is experienced by the individual.

He also considers Spirit, the means by which learners learn, to be beyond the immediacy of faith (Hegel, 1977: 4). Spirit is thus more than simply a dimension found within every human being (Hay and Nye, 2006: 63), or an 'ontological reality for human beings' (Hyde, 2008: 29); for Hegel, the role of Spirit is to give 'insight into what knowing is' (Hegel, 1977: 17). As the self has truth only in relationship with the other, Spirit is epitomised in the work of each in the cyclic movement of negation, loss and return. As a consequence, Spirit might be considered the third partner in learning. This idea also has implications for new theory and will be outlined in later chapters of the current thesis.

¹¹⁰ This might concern a lack of boundaries between learning and the learner or even the teacher and learner.

¹¹¹ Buber's *I- Thou* (1970) was written in contrast to the 'modern mode of individualism brought about by the alienation of the self from its primarily ontological dialogical situation (Rotenstreich, 1991: 26). In this text, the self is signified by two relationships: between I-Thou and I-it. The 'it' world is concerned with experience therefore limited by time and space, objects and form (Buber, 1970: 61). On the other hand, I-Thou, existing between the self and other i.e. other humans, nature and spiritual beings (Buber, 1970: 56) 'has no borders' (Buber, 1970:55). Being non-objectified it can only be spoken with one's whole being (Buber, 1970: 54). As a spiritual relationship presented as one of giving and receiving, it is not defined or understood. It can neither be thought or described.

¹¹² In *The Spirit of the Child*, Hay and Nye use the same patterning as Buber in order to describe each context of relation. For example, they identify an 'I-God' relation (Hay and Nye, 2006: 109). The use of the hyphen signifies the child's awareness of him or herself as subject in relation to 'other' but it also illuminates the non-cognitive element of spiritual relation, in which learners are able to perceive the world in relational terms. The self is not an entity in-itself. It only has value in relation. This relation, they propose, is the 'core of children's spirituality, out of which can arise meaningful aesthetic experience, religious experience' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 109).

The aim of Hegel's philosophy then might be to describe how Spirit as an instrument of learning brings one to come to know an object or entity in question as absolute. It is within the process of learning that Spirit acts. In the light of the research question, which considers how an individual might learn authentically, it is necessary to retrieve the relevant aspects of this complex theory in order to address the issues of knowledge and truth in a Christian context, and in particular consider again the role of the individual in relation to learning. Hegel's system takes the form of a dialectical movement of consciousness and this is outlined now, initially in the light of *Science of Logic* and subsequently *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Secondary sources written by Nigel Tubbs and Gillian Rose also identify key themes for contemporary education and further critique highlights again the necessity of a new perspective for Christian education.

2.3 Consciousness: objectivity

Hegel's philosophy explores the movement of loss and return between two modes of self-consciousness.¹¹³ This is presented initially in the early part of the *Phenomenology*, in the section entitled 'Sense-certainty.' It is not the content of knowledge that is significant here, but the nature of knowledge and the means by which it is attained. The first mode of consciousness is that which is in-itself and considered to be unconditional truth. It is knowledge which is 'as it is.' It is objective, universal and pure. The other is that which is *for* itself: the natural self-consciousness or individual. This consciousness strives for self-actualisation and concerns one coming to know truth subjectively and within experience (Hegel, 1977: 61; 64).

As stated above, in metaphysical philosophy any entity, notion or truth posited in-itself is an abstract universality. In *Science of Logic*, Hegel highlights how this Universal¹¹⁴ has knowledge of Spirit and knowledge of itself as Spirit but is not known in its purest form outside of itself (Hegel, 1969: 70). He writes: 'it is the unity of being and nothing' (Hegel, 1969: 73). This Universal however is an absolute beginning (Hegel, 1969: 67; 70) and it is from this beginning that consciousness embarks on the learning cycle. Hegel proposes that in the journey to absolute knowledge there must be other. Knowledge is not for itself but for the learning

¹¹³ It is possible to draw parallels between each mode of consciousness and each paradigm presented in the Literature Review. In the current chapter, both paradigms are critiqued in the light of Hegelian philosophy.

¹¹⁴ The use of the capital 'U' in the word 'universal' pertains to the designation of the term as an entity (e.g. a Universal or the Universal). When the lower case is used, this designates 'universal' as a description or concept. It is its designation as an entity that in this thesis is considered illusory.

individual in relation to it. As soon as the relationship of truth and thought (or learning and the learner) is established, the truth of the Universal is alienated from itself and brought into negativity (Hegel, 1969: 71-2). It is this negation that constitutes the loss: loss of pure objectivity and therefore the loss of the power of the in-itself. The Universal becomes posited immediately, meaning that it becomes 'known.' It is no longer in-itself, but 'at one with its self-alienation' (Hegel, 1969: 69).

Self is lost to the other. It now becomes both truth for consciousness and consciousness of itself. In its negativity, knowledge becomes contingent on the knower and as Tubbs suggests, 'self has exported its vulnerability' (Tubbs, 2008: 29). But rather than perceiving negativity as problematic, this promotes the value of negation for education. Whilst the truth is the opposite of the truth the Universal assumed for itself, negation lays the ground for authentic learning (Tubbs, 2008: 29). Tubbs writes: 'the self is indebted to this other for his own identity' (Tubbs, 2008: 30). This will be considered again later in this chapter.

This new identity results from mediation. Since the individual is in relation with the Universal (Hegel, 1969: 68-72), the consciousness of the individual mediates for its truth. Yet still existent as Universal, knowledge of it is reflected back. When reflected back to self, it is not the truth of the Universal 'as it is' that is apprehended: rather it is the mediated truth (Hegel, 1977: 58-61). Hegel writes: 'knowledge of the Universal only comes to us through the world of appearance which has mediated it' (Hegel, 1977: 89), highlighting mediation as facilitating a revised version of truth. The return ensures that the subjective truth is also negated; thus, knowledge of the Universal is not eschewed but re-evaluated.

As well as through mediation, the pure state of the Universal is negated in the light of the contingent dimension of the learning individual. Contingent truth is truth as 'I' know it (Hegel, 1977: 61). Hegel asserts that contingent truth is 'untruth in perceiving it' (Hegel, 1977: 70) and as Tubbs points out: 'truth itself is compromised by its contingency upon social and political preconditions' (Tubbs, 2005: 83). Therefore, contingency allows for both interpretation and misinterpretation in the light of the learner's own personal history and context. These become the lenses through which the object of truth is apprehended and as it is an object for consciousness, it becomes 'my meaning' that is reflected back. The Universal which is 'for us' does not surmount to knowledge of the universal reflected into itself, but the negated representation of that which is in-itself reflected back. This does not make the object untrue as a universal, but highlights the individual's apprehension of it as a significant factor in learning (Hegel, 1977: 70).

This has implications for Christian pedagogy especially since in the case of Paradigm One, representations of truths concerning the Universal are often presented as *fait accompli*. As stated in Chapter One, it is not the task of this thesis to criticise the Christian faith or its framework of belief. Nevertheless, the issue here is to do with how knowledge of 'God' as a Universal for example is represented and attained. In the light of what has been presented of Hegelian philosophy so far, it might be suggested that any representation that does not take into account the contingent life of the learning individual, might in fact surmount to misrepresentation; furthermore, any truth attained might surmount to untruth.

Concerns regarding representation might be raised in the light of the work of, for example, Andrew Wright, champion of a doctrinal education grounded in Trinitarian Christian Spirituality and a prominent figure in Paradigm One.¹¹⁵ For Wright, the truth of the Christian tradition is unquestionable and fixed. The story of God is presented through the infallible metanarrative of doctrine and scripture; authentic faith is found not through self-reflection on a God who is within, but in dependence on a God who through Christian tradition is revealed as truth (Wright, 1998: 72). Wright argues:

The affirmations of the creeds give a systematic formulation to a realistic narrative story grounded in the objectivity of the divine reality and of God's providential plan for humanity through creation, redemption and reconciliation (Wright, 1998: 74).

Additionally, Mark Griffiths, also introduced in Chapter One,¹¹⁶ describes the story of salvation for children's workers. Outlining how, in contrast to a pure and loving God humans are sinful and deserving of eternal punishment, he explains how educators might bring children to the point of accepting a life of faith. However, it might be argued that a life of faith here concerns the apprehension and acceptance of his own representations of truth. He emphasises that through Christ who took the punishment on himself, all are able to receive forgiveness for sin. Therefore, he encourages them to respond to this 'good news' in order to become Christ's followers (Griffiths, 2003: 51-5). Yet the implication for learners is that in order to become a Christian they must follow a pre-ordained set of instructions and images. The response is of the head and seemingly bypasses the child as a learning individual.

It is suggested then that the perspectives of Christian education highlighted, which facilitate this pre-ordained trajectory, serve as agents of reductionism and potentially limit the means by which learners come to faith. In this case, it is only the learner in relation with the model

¹¹⁵ See pages 15 and 30.

¹¹⁶ See page 17.

or method that encourages faith development and salvation rather than, as will be explored later in this thesis, the absolute. Models vary across denominations and agencies but in many cases, they follow a similar pattern: learners hear a message and are given a chance to respond. Examples of models include beach missions, holiday clubs, and school groups ¹¹⁷ as well as Sunday Clubs and Messy Church. ¹¹⁸

As much as the thinking of Wright and Griffiths presented here pertains more to ideology than methodology, ¹¹⁹ their ideas are applicable to these models. Both apply a pre-determined label and means of interpretation to a universal concept. Representation of this concept is contingent on the assumptions of the teacher and this is passed on to the student. Biblical hermeneutics also reflect a Western and therefore linear mode of learning and as located within a specific time and space, such a perspective can engender culturally specific responses. The journey to salvation as described above and represented by the Four Points outlined in Chapter One, ¹²⁰ reflects the formulaic response to the Christian story that has become an accepted part of Christian rhetoric. Yet the story of the Bible is not limited to a simple formula. For critical scholars such as John Pridmore, the formulaic approach cannot become the singular means of any learning individual experiencing a life of faith. As highlighted above, for Pridmore, the life of faith pertains to a 'continuous now' (Pridmore, 2009: 197). ¹²¹

From a Hegelian perspective, it might be argued then that the perspectives highlighted here, whilst purporting to present objective truth, only reflect the truth as the teacher has taught it; understanding also pertains only to the learner's acceptance of what has been taught (Hegel, 1969: 75). In this case, it might be suggested that such a description of God is not a manifestation of God's essence but a representational positing: it is an external depiction and a mere name. As noted through Rizzuto's work in the Literature Review, to provide a 'one size fits all' image of God to learners without taking into account their own image might be to set up an unhelpful division. ¹²² Hyde also goes as far to suggest that this does violence to learner's own ideas and is an infringement on their rights (Hyde, 2008: 120).

¹¹⁷ www.scriptureunion.org.uk and www.urbansaints.org accessed on 10/10/2106.

¹¹⁸ www.messychurch.org accessed 10/10/2016.

¹¹⁹ Neither Wright nor Griffiths write with a particular model in mind. Wright's ideas are more concerned with ethos in education, whilst Griffiths presents educational principles to be worked out in general practice.

¹²⁰ See page 16 www.the4points.com/uk accessed on 23/03/2016

¹²¹ See page 21.

¹²² See page 43.

Furthermore, the mystery of the Gospel story that concerns the redemption of all people here is reduced to a linear conceptualisation that must be grasped cognitively and empirically. As will be outlined in Chapter Five, this conceptualisation is antithetical to the means by which Kierkegaard for example considers both the representation of the absolute and the experience of the life of faith. This idea also signposts new theory and highlights the need for a new perspective that whilst remaining authentic to the Christian faith tradition, is not limited by a formula or illusory conceptualisations. This idea will be considered in more detail in Chapter Three.

In summary, without acknowledging the contingent 'I' of each learner, or the consideration of culture and context as key factors in learning, educators misrecognise the reality they seek to present. As already suggested, the presentation of this 'reality' or universal is not the reality as it is in-itself, but a mediated reflection contingent on the individual and therefore an illusion. A further illusion is the immediate consciousness of the learning individual, and this is considered critically in the following sub-section.

2.4 Consciousness: immediacy

Hegel posits immediacy as the 'poorest truth' (Hegel, 1977: 58). Here immediate knowledge amounts to Being and as an object in its entirety, its truth is the truth of its being and nothing more. Therefore, it can only be apprehended - not comprehended (Hegel, 1977: 58). This notion is reminiscent of the existential analytic presented in Chapter Two (Heidegger, 1962: 27) and certainly scholars in Paradigm Two would concur with this suggestion. For example, Rebecca Nye's idea of 'God's ways of being with children and children's ways of being with God' (Nye, 2009: 5) is highlighted as an immediate expression of 'I – God' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 109) that having an ontological foundation, is also apprehended – not comprehended. Yet not being comprehended, this immediate knowledge might be deemed as groundless. Bypassing thought-consciousness, it has resonance with the learning individual but nothing more, thus questioning the aim of such an assertion in the promotion of a life of faith.

However, the significance of Hegel's perspective here is in the role of thought - consciousness. As highlighted above, as soon as one thinks, a separation is established between Being and consciousness. The thought dimension of self-consciousness alienates itself from immediacy in order to recognise and come to know itself. Through the presence of this consciousness which is other, the negation of Being and the mediation of immediacy then become a necessity. In this cycle of negation, mediation and return to self, truth is presented as a

property of consciousness (Hegel, 1977: 61) and not within Being. Drawing on Nye's example of an immediate apprehension of God, as soon as consciousness becomes alienated from Being, this apprehension becomes illusory. The relation is no longer immediate and therefore is also illusory. However, as has already been noted, in a new perspective of learning, illusion might become a pedagogical tool.¹²³

When considered immediate, only a limited idea of God is perceived. 'God' is only God in relation to the immediate apprehension. This, it might be argued, has political power as the truth it conceives is removed from any absolute truth and so can be used to undermine any dogma or truth considered externally. Furthermore, the idea of immediacy is reductionist. The effect of placing the Universal (i.e. God) in the realm of the individual promotes an immediate universality. As will be illustrated in more detail later, when the universal is negated in favour of the individual, the individual takes on its own universality. Thus, the image of God is truth for the individual learner, but puts the individual at odds with the object in-itself that was negated, and consequently the religious framework of which it is a part.¹²⁴

By negating the inherited image of God, Nye as a Christian educator increases the likelihood highlighted in Chapter One, of possibility becoming its own truth. It might also be suggested that this notion is antithetical to Christian education. It becomes clear that the child's recognition of God is actually a misrecognition of the Universal and true only for self. This differs from individual to individual but when reflected back to the immediacy of the relation it can become accepted as universal truth. Thus, it is not only immediacy here that is questionable but also the learner in relation to learning that is under suspicion.

It is clear therefore that in each form of consciousness and thus both paradigms, the representation of truth and the means by which truth is established are open to critique. Due to the relation, immediate knowledge of the Universal becomes mediated knowledge and cannot be represented truthfully; objective truth can neither be accepted as *fait accompli* without a consideration of the contingent 'I' who establishes the thought relation. The value of mediation and contingency however is significant to the new perspective and as will be explained later, in the middle space between learning partners, both contribute to the individual's education.

¹²³ It might be considered that the space occupied by consciousness is the place of creativity, imagination and emotion.

¹²⁴ This idea will be explored further later in the thesis in terms of Kierkegaard's idea of faith, and a more detailed appraisal of 'representation' is featured in the final chapters.

Without an understanding of the significance of each in relation to other, each scenario reinforces the folly of Being without relation. What is required then is an educative relation in which both the objective and immediate have a role. When Spirit, *between* the antithesis of learner and learning, is granted permission to work, that is educate, learning can begin to have authenticity. Tubbs notes that education in Hegel is not concerned with learning of the truth but with truth *as* learning (Tubbs, 2008: 3). Thus, Spirit resides in the middle space and this is where education takes place. This point will be reinforced in conclusion to the current chapter.

2.5 Illusion

In summary of the discussion so far it might be stated that both objectivity and immediacy on their own terms raise the issue of truth as illusion. In illusion, each partner holds an uncritical view of itself. Later in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, these illusory states are illustrated historically.

The first is exemplified by Hegel in terms of the historical Stoicism that represents the unity of being-in-itself and being for-itself; it is independent and self-assured (Hegel, 1977: 120). It is also a consciousness that thinks. It 'holds something to be essentially important, or true and good only in so far as it thinks it to be such' (Hegel, 1977: 121). This is the illusion of independence on the part of an illusory being.¹²⁵ According to Harris, as a mode of consciousness, Stoicism becomes determinate as the Imperial power of Rome, emerging out of the Hellenistic world (Harris, 1995: 41), and having its independence confirmed by its many dependents. The Stoic for Hegel is illusory: there is no objective knowledge and everything is a shadow of truth (Tubbs, 2005: 82). Although its truth lies in the beyond, it can only come to understanding through the mediation of appearance which posits truth 'for it' (Hegel, 1977: 88-89). Arising from spiritual autonomy and any lack of recognition of the other, this is error (Hegel, 1977: 111).

For Hegel, the antithesis of Stoicism is Scepticism. This mode of consciousness recognises the illusion of essentiality. Suspicious of anything that is immutable, immediate or fixed, and being in fear of recognising or representing the universal as truth in error, it establishes itself in opposition to the truth of the 'in-itself.' Allen Wood views the 'transition from the culture of Greek city-states to that of the Roman Empire as involving a loss of community and along with it, a sense of self' (Wood, 1998: 305). Furthermore, Harris notes that this independence is freedom from reality (Harris, 1995: 41). For the Sceptic, (determined as the Greek cities of

¹²⁵ The idea of 'illusory being' is Hegelian and features in the text *Science of Logic*.

Eteocles and Polyneices who struggled against Imperial Rome), there can be no knowledge other than that gained through personal experience (Harris, 1995: 41).

As immediate subjectivity, Scepticism misrecognises itself as illusory. As Tubbs suggests, Scepticism is one manifestation of the awareness of the illusion because it 'believes itself unable to think the truth of anything and each thought will be undermined by the groundlessness of all thought' (Tubbs, 2008: 87). For example, in Paradigm Two, Clive Erricker whose thesis supports the idea of immediate truth seeking to overcome the error of ideological certainty (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 67), provides an example of educational Scepticism. His critical pedagogy evades the presentation of objective truth and promotes learning from within.¹²⁶

The problem with the Sceptic is that whilst the self-knowing 'I' is recognised as illusory and thus negated, the contingent 'I' does not accept the other. Having overcome the other, this 'I' reflects back into its self but in so doing it becomes its own certainty. It deems this certainty to be Truth but in fact misrecognises the illusion of its own self-sufficiency.¹²⁷ Whilst it presents itself as the possibility to be something other, when reflected back it becomes another form of 'certainty which is identical with its truth' (Hegel, 1977: 104).

For Hegel, to dispense with thought consciousness completely would only leave a blank space and a 'hazy distinction between an absolute truth and some other kind of truth' (Hegel, 1977: 48). Hegel suggests that to do so comes from fear: fear of commitment to an absolute idea. Yet Speculative philosophy considers it absurd to reject the possibility of knowing absolute truth: hence the *Phenomenology's* long progression 'forward to true knowledge' (Hegel, 1977: 49). The path to truth involves self in other. In this case, there is no fear. The recognition of illusion takes place through the illusory being that recognises it.

A further illusion is that self and other are united. In this scenario, each avoids dependence on the other and validates its own position by becoming one with the other. Here distinctives are eroded and the lines of separation are blurred. Unification does not involve negation or loss to other in order to return to self, but each loses itself to the other and 'fails to recollect otherness in itself' (Tubbs, 2008: 89). Tubbs notes that this situation transcends simple positing so that the aggregate of self and other becomes a transformed being (Tubbs, 2005: 110) which is more self-assured and has a clearer ownership of personalised learning.

¹²⁶ See pages 35-6.

¹²⁷ Self-sufficiency will be critiqued in later chapters in the light of Kierkegaard's philosophy.

When the boundaries that separate self and other are blurred and ultimate unity is attained, the unified being becomes its own life and its own independence. Furthermore, it becomes its own essentiality therefore consciousness in-itself. Hegel writes: 'self-certainty still has no truth, for it would have truth only if its own being-for-self had confronted it as an independent object' (Hegel, 1977: 113). This form of self-certainty is illusory in terms of its view of the other, without whom it cannot become truth. The truth of error is misrecognised in a situation when error negates error without the recognition of either side. This notion of self-certainty is reinforced through Hegel's illustration of a master and slave relationship which serves to illuminate the problems that arise when consciousness aspires to its own independence.

2.6 The master/slave relation

Located later in the *Phenomenology*, in a section entitled 'Lordship and Bondage,' the dialectical relation of self and other is illustrated through the struggle between a master and a slave.¹²⁸ The master and slave here each represent a form of self-consciousness, that in the light of the current discussion, equate to objectivity and immediacy, therefore the nature of truth in each paradigm or more specifically, the learning individual and 'God.' The struggle occurs as each seeks to attain self-actualisation.

Independent consciousness this time, is characterised by a master or lord who is self-assured and desires autonomy. He also has a slave who he holds in subjection (Hegel, 1977: 115). The slave (or 'bondsmen' as described in Hegel's text) is the negation of the master. He is dependent on the master and his identity and truth are formed by this relationship and his work. The slave is the element for which 'free self-consciousness comes to know itself in the many and varied forms of life as a real negativity' (Hegel, 1977: 123). Yet in his desire to establish his own truth, the slave attempts liberation from his master (Hegel, 1977: 113): in determining to know the truth of himself, he seeks to overcome the mastery which establishes his position as negative (Hegel, 1977: 114).

As has already been determined, the relation prevents each from establishing itself as an independent consciousness. The master's truth comes not in his universality but in his dependence on the slave. He is a master because he has a slave and needs the negativity of himself in order to establish his position. His truth is mediated through this other mode of

¹²⁸ Again the master and slave might be deemed to illustrate Stoicism and Scepticism, thus Paradigms One and Two respectively.

consciousness: independently he cannot be known. He 'achieves his recognition through another consciousness' (Hegel, 1977: 116) but also seeks to retain independence. Similarly, the slave can never be free. His truth lies in his relationship with the master and he is only able to recognise his own truth in the relation.

However, in the bid for autonomy, each seeks the death of the other. The master does this by preventing the slave's bid for freedom; the slave does so through his own liberation from other. This results in a struggle between them that causes tension and pain. Yet Hegel argues that the struggle involves not just the desired death of the other but the risk of each to his own life (Hegel, 1977: 113). Neither the master nor the slave can exist without the relation that is to be overcome. As this 'trial by death' negates the truth of the other and therefore does away with independent truth (Hegel, 1977: 114), to pursue the death of other is also to admit to the untruth of one's own self. Life needs the negativity that is death for its own life. It might be suggested then that each mode of consciousness misrecognises its own essentiality.

Moreover, when the life and death struggle aims at securing freedom and eschewing negativity, the slave himself in turn asserts his mastery (Hegel, 1977: 117). It might be argued then that what takes place through the activity of liberation is the establishment of new dogmas. In liberation, self-consciousness - the negativity of the self-knowing 'I' - is alienated from its truth in its difference to become truth for itself. In its attempt to expose and overcome error, the slave misrecognises itself as also being in error. Liberation from the 'error' of truth merely sets up another 'truth' within a new position (Hegel, 1977: 124). Each dogma becomes its own Universal. As Hegel states: 'it procures for itself the certainty of its own freedom and thereby raises it to truth' (Hegel, 1977: 124). It might be argued then, that scholars whose desire is to overcome the mastery of objectivity through liberation, subsequently become masters in their own right. For example, in the light of this suggestion, Paradigm Two's Clive Erricker promotes mastery as much as Paradigm One's Andrew Wright. Furthermore, the status of the 'other' in each case is misrecognised.

The speculative philosopher¹²⁹ however recognises the illusion of freedom (Hegel, 1977: 111-5) and the illusion of his or her own immediacy. Additionally, the philosopher who claims to 'know' the Universal recognises the illusion of objectivity on the part of the contingent

¹²⁹ Speculative philosophy of education, Hegel's being one example, is presented by Rose as the condition of the possibility of experience as the condition of the meaning of experience (Rose, 1981:23) and by Tubbs as education that results from learning the truth of itself as learning (Tubbs, 2008: 4).

learner. When such recognition occurs, the essential sees itself in its non-essence and the Universal sees itself in the individual.

This statement marks a significant point in the current thesis as it takes the discussion away from perspectives such as either duality or immediacy in the relation of self and other, to that which considers the significance of the self *in* the other. This idea signposts the focus of the following chapter as well as the exploration of a new educational shape. As a 'solution' to the problems of pedagogy in a Christian context, this rationale does not provide an easy option and the pain of this position is explored later in the thesis. The movement of overcoming and returning is characterised by the life and death struggle which is continually imbalanced. Yet with tension always evident, consciousness is itself 'absolute dialectical unrest' (Hegel, 1977: 124) and this movement as Spirit, is the movement of learning. This is epitomised in the theory of the 'Unhappy Consciousness' which is considered in the next part of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

2.7 The Unhappy Consciousness

The Unhappy Consciousness involves the relationship between forms of self-consciousness such as the Stoic and Sceptic as well as the master and slave. In terms of the current discussion, self and other are now equated with learning and the learner, but ideas presented are equally applicable to the relationship of the two paradigms.

As described above, the attempt at freedom on the part of an independent consciousness, and its subsequent return to self, results in its duplicating its own self-consciousness. What was previously represented as the separation of the self and other, 'is now lodged into one' (Hegel, 1977: 126). For example, the liberated slave misrecognises its own mastery which is now duplicated as an independent self-consciousness. As such, he becomes his own essentiality. In the struggle and fight for liberation, each now reproduces itself as its opposite. The slave becomes another master.

Nevertheless, in the 'Unhappy Consciousness,' there cannot be two masters. The autonomous self as such is driven out 'at the very moment when it imagines it has successfully attained to a peaceful unity with the other' (Hegel, 1977: 126). It recognises the need for relation to its own negativity and so the movement of negation and return, introduced at the outset, perpetuates (Hegel, 1977: 127). The movement here is important as it signifies the continuation of learning. Although neither partner has yet accepted itself *in* the other, there is now an 'intermediate position where abstract thinking is in contact with the individuality of

consciousness qua individuality' (Hegel, 1977: 130). This educational process reflects the movement of self, loss and return to self, and in the middle, the individual learns. It is Spirit that enables each self-consciousness to see the truth of itself in the other, and this learning is spiritual. The idea of movement in learning is significant in exploring a new perspective, and will be addressed more fully throughout the thesis.

Although both Stoic and Sceptic for example profess to 'know' their own version of truth, the Unhappy Consciousness deems this impossible. The negation highlighted above disallows each consciousness from knowing itself as a universal. But what it does know is relation. The Unhappy Consciousness as a single consciousness is in relation with the relation of each partner and therefore knows itself as the negative of each. Thus, it might be described, albeit a contradiction, as the relation of relations (Tubbs, 2005: 157). Again, in terms of its significance for the current thesis, the relation of relations allows educators and learners to reconsider their position, understanding the value of the negative, and reflecting on relation *through* relation. In later chapters, this notion is highlighted as a template for learning; it establishes learning relationships that do not seek unity or duality, but recognise the importance of relation *with* relation.

However, this does not present an easy answer to the research question. The two parts of the Unhappy Consciousness relate together in a dialectic of unrest. This means that there is a contradiction in the self who learns. Yet, this contradiction is significant as it prevents essentiality from becoming its own truth. Furthermore, the movement of the Unhappy Consciousness keeps the relationship of self and other open. Contradictions and oppositions are therefore not to be overcome but to be recognised. This idea again signposts ideas pertaining to the new perspective. Tubbs writes: 'the recognition of misrecognition is the education of illusion by illusion' (Tubbs, 2005: 159). Each only becomes aware of his own truth in the other and before coming to know the truth of himself, each must lose himself (Hegel, 1977: 114).

In later chapters of the current thesis, the educational movement of 'repetition' is explored; this movement includes both the loss of self and a leap of faith to the absolute. It also embraces illusion as the starting point for learning and thus considers the recognition of the illusion of illusion as the learner's own education. As a further educational movement, the notion of 'Bildung' is also explored; this exploration considers again the significance of the relation of relations, and identifies how, in the middle space, learning as Spirit might inspire

authenticity. This also includes the movement of loss and return, with the learning individual central to the educative process. These ideas are outlined in Chapters Six and Seven.

Hegel also describes at length how coming to know is not about dealing with error but about learning *through* error. Learning takes place through the struggle in the relation of relations. The struggle itself is part of the learning process. Therefore, a spiritual act of education involves learning within the relation of relations, learning of the illusion of illusions and experiencing the overcoming of overcoming, which in a double negation all finally see self and other absolutely.¹³⁰

The separation of self and other remains but it is through the unrest within the middle space that learning begins. For the teacher, Tubbs writes: 'there is meaning and significance not only in her struggles as a teacher but also in the way she realises the truth of struggle in the education of others' (Tubbs, 2005: 146). When recognising oneself in the other, one can discover a new experience of freedom. Harris explains that this experience of freedom is creative: the master gives the orders, but the slave is free to interpret them for himself in the light of his own world (Harris, 1995: 40). In this way, he accepts contingency and allows this to inspire the creation and re-creation of the free self. Mediation and negation are not overcome. Rather, to discover oneself in the other is to achieve freedom of Spirit and, for education, to begin the truth of learning.

2.8 Learning and the middle space

It might be suggested that it is the recognition of the illusion of life gained through overcoming the error of death¹³¹ that is the beginning of learning. In *Education in Hegel*, Nigel Tubbs explains that spiritual learning involves working with illusion in order to understand the illusory re-presentation of the immediate or the in-itself, be it the illusion of self- certainty, the illusion of freedom, or the illusion of unity, all described above. He suggests that when illusion learns of itself as illusory being, this reflects the truth of illusion known as illusion. This is education. It knows the ground of illusion and the negation of the ground of illusion to be the same groundlessness: 'it is their being learned' (Tubbs, 2008: 87).

¹³⁰ For this thesis, the dialectical unrest that is the Unhappy Consciousness is significant, in its continuous repetition of loss and return that evades drawing conclusions or any claim to truth. However as established here, the result of this system is absolute knowledge, in which both the individual and universal are unified. For Kierkegaard and his followers, it is the completion of the system rather than the dialectical process that is problematic and as will be highlighted in Chapter Three, any form of closure regarding knowledge results in inauthenticity, which is deemed as sin.

¹³¹ This is a reference to the master/slave relation outlined above. See pages 82-4.

For Hegel, truth comes in the middle term between two positions. Here the in-itself is brought into relation with the learning individual. Spirit, who 'ministers to each in its dealings with the other' (Hegel, 1977: 136), is the mediator who disallows any one form of individuality from becoming its own truth. Spirit ensures that each relate through the middle space. As noted above, Spirit is the third partner in learning. Spirit who acts as a mediator, is in relation with each position: this is the relation of their relation. In its personified role, Spirit gives advice to each (Hegel, 1977: 137). Although it is a single consciousness, Spirit is not abstractly a universal: it is surrendered to the relation. Therefore, the learning relation consists of self and other that is in relation with the relation of Spirit to each.

Spirit embraces the illusions of contingency and mediation which result from the illusion of objectivity; learning then has the freedom to re-present the objects of consciousness and continue to do so. The experience of the opposition between learning and the learner is embraced as Spirit and this space is the middle term in which education takes place. In her book of the same name, this space is referred to by the latter Twentieth Century philosopher Gillian Rose as the 'broken middle' (Rose, 1992: xiv). The same term, following Rose, is also utilized by Nigel Tubbs in his text *The Philosophy of the teacher* (Tubbs, 2005: 12).

In the introduction to *The Broken Middle*, Rose reinforces Hegel's distrust of essentiality and duality and boldly suggests that 'anti-utopia and anarchy turns into triumphant ecclesiology' (Rose, 1992: viii). Instead she claims that that which separates the two cannot actually be overcome: the broken middle explores the truth within and between each one (Rose, 1992: xiv). Additionally, she makes the claim that any individual separated from a Universal is illusory. For example, she describes the dualism of one position over another in terms of post-modernity's attempt to overcome the struggle between universality and particularity; through this example she indicates how, when the tension is evaded and each appears as a singular object, the result is a 'sociology of control' (Rose, 1992: xiii). The 'broken middle' however investigates the break between the Universal and particular, and it is Spirit in this middle space that allows for one to authentically learn (Rose, 1992: xii).

In another text, *Hegel contra-sociology* (1981), Rose likens the Universal and particular to the church and state, both of which it is purported, exist as independent entities and as such are self-sufficient. However, her argument is that such dualistic thinking is an epistemological trap, claiming that the divergences actually 'rest on an identical framework.' (Rose, 1981:1). She also later argues that the identities of church and the state, although contradictory, are also the same (Rose, 1981: 49).

For Rose, the identification of a broken middle not only highlights the importance of the relation of relations but also of the difficulties that result. She asserts that without process and pain, one cannot come to know. The broken middle cannot and should not be repaired, but it *can* learn its own truth as a contradiction. It is in relation that the work of spiritual education is done. Commenting on the 'broken middle,' Tubbs writes: 'the truth of learning is where the student learns about himself in relation to the teacher' (Tubbs, 2008: 168). This learning takes place through contradiction and experience: not through overcoming. When contradictions are misrecognised, they either require a resolution or are simply evaded. Meanwhile, when contradictions are welcomed and the teacher 'comes to know them differently, she can comprehend their truth in and as the philosophy of the teacher' (Tubbs, 2005: 168).

This is difficult to fathom and just as difficult to put into practice. But Rose suggests that if dichotomies are seen as relations, both sides might exist in unity without being unified (Rose, 1981: 54-5). Therefore, it is the premise of this thesis that spiritual educators can find themselves in the broken middle of the relationship between paradigms in a space where contradictions find a place to meet. It also suggests that learners might allow illusion to inspire learning concerning 'God,' that in the middle space, is spiritual. Individuals might be encouraged to wrestle with their own personal illusions of 'God' against the backdrop of inherited or assumed conceptualisations. In the light of the broken middle, these illusions serve to create a life giving, dynamic notion of God that does not remain static but grows and changes as mediation and contingency continue to influence. Again, this idea is significant in the proposal of a new perspective of Christian education and is explored further in later chapters of the current thesis.

For learning per se, Tubbs also commends the educator to 'mind the gap.' This involves being 'mindful of the gap' (Tubbs, 2000: 56) and simply it encourages the individual to think beyond any simple subject/object separation. It encourages him or her to acknowledge Spirit as the third person of learning, residing in the middle space, and to embrace the struggle and tension which exists between positions. It encourages policy makers to avoid attempts to close the gap, be it through totalitarianism, liberation or unification. Finally, it encourages all to be 'resigned to the necessity of the gap as dichotomy and separation' (Tubbs, 2000: 56).

In conclusion, in a life-giving spiritual education which is mindful of the middle, pain must exist. The unrest must continue. When the teacher retains the tension, recognises each position as illusory within the illusion of misrecognition, and teaches from within the middle,

then he or she is a philosophically spiritual teacher. Within the 'Unhappy Consciousness' which brings together the assurance of the Stoic and the free thinking of the Sceptic, there exists a creative tension from which can emerge the Spirit of education.

On the basis of these ideas, the discussion continues. Whilst Hegel's philosophy presents a cyclic system, the telos of which is absolute knowledge, and whilst this chapter has explored the relation of the learner and learning in the respect of the individual and 'God,' conclusions here do not consider the telos of inspiring faith in learners. Thus, the following chapter presents a Kierkegaardian reflection on the notion of relation as it pertains to faith. As well as exploring in more depth the ideas of loss and return as well as negation and contingency, Kierkegaard's philosophy also embodies the presence of pain in learning and provides an understanding of how this pain might be educative. As a writer whose ideas transcend theology, philosophy and education as specifics, the significance of his personal life to his writings will be outlined. Moreover, Kierkegaard is not fearful of the unknown and whilst acknowledging relation, also dares to make the leap to what is beyond the known. This is a key theme in his work and will be considered in the following chapter as well as later in this thesis.

CHAPTER THREE: TRUTH

3.1 Introduction

The work of Danish 19th Century thinker Soren Kierkegaard is the main focus of this chapter, studied in order to further assess the ideas of relation and the middle space as well as to introduce the aporia which comes with unknowing. Several of Kierkegaard's texts are authored pseudonymously and his veiled identity in these, represents the dialectic presented in Chapter Two. This chapter also illustrates how Kierkegaard's thinking, recorded in works published from the 1830s onwards, continues the theme of illusion and is thus relevant to the current study in its concern of error and truth. As well as highlighting the relationship of a learner and teacher, this chapter also considers the nature of knowledge, and particularly in the light of his own experience of Christianity, it is noted how Kierkegaard proposes an individual might learn for a life of faith.

Through an exploration of his texts *Either/Or*, *Fear and Trembling* and *Philosophical Fragments* respectively, and supported by secondary sources by Collins (1983), Gardiner (1988), Rose (1992), Tubbs (2005; 2009) and Walsh (2009), this chapter provides comment on themes presented earlier in the thesis such as dualism, spirit, relation and truth, as well as introducing the ideas of unknowing, paradox and despair. As such it paves the way for the deeper philosophical analysis of learning to be presented in later chapters and contributes further to the exploration of a new perspective of 'faith' in Christian education.

3.2 Background

As a philosopher, the intention of Kierkegaard's texts is to allow his readers to think for themselves. As a theologian, his texts include reflection on Biblical and theological themes such as the relationship of the learning individual with God.¹³² This dual status is reflective of the dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity already investigated in this thesis. However, his writing is not necessarily intended for religious use or teaching. The literary aspects of his texts deal with the aesthetic, ethical and religious as modes of consciousness (Collins, 1983: 12) and these are considered as means by which individuals learn. His writing is often self-reflective and he addresses these modes in the light of a number of personal issues, including the reconciliation with and death of his father, his failure to be accepted into the Danish

¹³² The absence of quotation marks here reflects Kierkegaard's use of the word God.

Church (Collins, 1983: 8-9) and most notably his broken engagement from Regina Olsen in 1841 (Collins, 1983: 8-9).

One hallmark of his texts is his reticence to accept inherited knowledge of philosophical and theological ideas as truth, as was expected in his day (Gardiner, 1988: 35-6). He wrestled with those who proposed certainty; for example, doubting the totality of the claim regarding Christ's saving actions, he was 'unable to realise the universal' (Collins, 1983: 11).

Nevertheless, he cannot be aligned with the existential pedagogues of Chapter One or the Sceptic of Chapter Two. His doubt does not equate to overcoming or negation: as an educational imperative, doubt for Kierkegaard involves a much more complex consideration of error and truth.¹³³ Collins states that Kierkegaard 'had the courage to doubt all things but not to know and take possession of all things' (Collins, 1983: 10). Hence Kierkegaard's thesis is that any claim to understanding is really misunderstanding. For him a life of faith involves a leap into the unknown (Kierkegaard, 1974: 53).

Kierkegaard's writing illustrates how any claim to truth is error. Historically, his thinking reflects a reaction to the systemisation of knowledge offered by Hegel and an unwillingness to accept knowledge as 'complete.' In particular, he refutes the suggestion that mutually opposed standpoints can be reconciled in a higher level of cognition as does Hegel at the climax of his *Phenomenology*. For Kierkegaard, the incompatibility of two positions (as illustrated by the Unhappy Consciousness for example) should be retained (Gardiner, 1988: 52). Also, uneasy with what he considers the self-sufficiency of the individual involved in the system, he suggests that any independence on the part of the learner should be renounced in order to gain a relation which lies in subordination to the external (Gardiner, 1988: 56),¹³⁴ or absolute.

It is important to note that primarily, Kierkegaard wrote in reaction to the school of Danish philosophers who were almost entirely influenced by Hegelian philosophy. He refuted their claim that the system could be taught directly and be fully understood (Tubbs, 2005: 214). Whilst not attacking Hegel per se, he disagreed with these philosophers' interpretation of Hegel, highlighting their lack of recognition of contingency. He purported that the clear-cut

¹³³ Error and Truth will be explored in more detail in later chapters of the current thesis.

¹³⁴ Kierkegaard's claim here suggests that as it is the consciousness of the learning individual that is the participant in Hegel's system, ultimately education concerns the self-sufficiency of the individual who attains absolute truth. However, Kierkegaard's ideas have theological resonance and here the implication is of the relation of the individual in relation to an absolute Other. How this is understood will be explored more fully later in the thesis.

manner in which their understanding of Hegelian philosophy was presented did not consider the individual as a part of history and society. He claimed that this understanding instead elevated the individual to a universal rather than a real person. Collins writes: 'he discovered that the system stood in ambiguous relation to the various spheres of life and hence required some treatment' (Collins, 1983: 112). Such a resolute interpretation of the system was an anathema to Kierkegaard and he thus sought to illuminate the error of this view.¹³⁵ As such his own ideas are less concerned with the notion of truth as absolute, but rather the movement of unknowing to the Absolute. (Collins, 1983: 19).

Opposing the 'direct' manner in which dogmatic principles were transmitted in the church for example, his interest lay in how learning might be indirect, thereby reaching no conclusions. As such, his 'aesthetic' texts are authored pseudonymously. Writing under different masks and guises he addresses the reader indirectly, distancing himself from what is presented so to allow the reader to draw his or her own conclusions regarding what is written and subsequently how it should be applied (Gardiner, 1998: 44). This again illustrates the diremption of self and other that is vital in learning. Additionally, the pseudonyms also highlight the relation of error and truth. Kierkegaard cannot speak directly in truth as himself, as his truth is not fully presented or understood. Rose notes that Kierkegaard's pseudonymity also addresses the issue of illusion. Suspicious of any claim to truth, he sought to 'dramatize illusion' by presenting himself as an illusion of himself (Rose, 1992: 10). So through the disguise of 'Climacus' or 'de Silentio' for example, he embodies error in relation to truth.¹³⁶

This also highlights the illusory being of any learner who claims to know independent truth. In Kierkegaard's view, in themselves, both author and pseudonym are in error. Through indirectness however, he allows himself and his pseudonymous identity to be the negation of each other in their error (Tubbs, 2008: 134), highlighting the illusion of the illusion introduced in Chapter Two. Furthermore, the reader is posited in relation to this relation. The relation of relations,¹³⁷ again introduced above, is thus established. Truth for both the author and the reader is not only in the negation of the objective self, but in the negation of this negation. This is a dialectic such as that introduced at the end of the previous chapter; hence there is

¹³⁵ It is the interpretation of Hegel rather than Hegel's philosophy per se that is placed under scrutiny. In *The Broken Middle*, Gillian Rose explores the nature of the relationship between Hegelian and Kierkegaardian ideas, and proposes that their relation might also be considered dialectically (Rose, 1992: 18).

¹³⁶ 'Climacus' is the pseudonym applied in the work *Philosophical Fragments*, with 'de Silentio' being the pseudonymous author of *Fear and Trembling*.

¹³⁷ The 'relation of relations' was introduced on page 85.

now not just one singular truth - the proposed truth comes through the individuals' relation with the relation of truth and error.

Illusion accordingly marks the path towards unknowing. For instance, under the guise of Johannes de Silentio in *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard outlines how in suspending his own identity as an author, he is reduced to silence. This allows readers the opportunity to also suspend their own certainties in relation to their understanding of the text. In turn, the voices of philosophers and theologians are silenced as readers are encouraged to avoid 'resting' on inherited belief systems and take the risk of venturing into the unknown (Kierkegaard, 1992: 12). Again, signposting a new perspective of Christian education, it might be considered that such learning might also suspend certainty regarding Biblical texts and principles, also taking the risk of venturing into the unknown. It is important to note however that 'suspending' does not equate to negation, and this will be highlighted further in due course.

Tubbs points out that such indirect communication also has relevance for the student-teacher relationship. As Kierkegaard's pseudonymous identity allows the reader to 'go his own way' (Tubbs, 2005: 216), an indirect teacher does not interfere with the learning of the student. Such teachers are able to provide the conditions for learning based on the concern and unrest of the unknown. The 'what' of learning is placed in subordination to the 'how,' signifying more of a focus on 'process' than on 'product' (Tubbs, 2005: 216).¹³⁸ This is another significant theme for the current thesis and through the educational notion of 'Bildung,' considered more fully in Chapter Six, the idea of learning as a process is highlighted.

Tubbs continues to note that the asymmetrical relation between the teacher and student is reflective of the unequal relation between man¹³⁹ and God. As was highlighted in Chapter Two and will be explored later in this chapter, God as a Universal cannot be known essentially: to reduce God to a 'what' is to be idolatrous. However, to retain the openness and imbalance of indirect communication, or the relation of relations, is to retain the substance and truth of the subject-object relation (Tubbs, 2005: 216-7). In this relational shape, each partner still exists and both contribute to authentic learning.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ This is resonant of experiential spiritual education, notably the *Godly Play* model, where the intentional process of learning allows children to construct their own meanings albeit within the framework of the Christian Tradition (e.g. Matthews, Mercer and Waltz, 2004: 262, 265; Lamont, 2007: 84-5; Hyde, 2008: 165). However, in the light of Kierkegaard, the relation between the individual learner and the tradition becomes open to critique. This will be expressed more fully later in the thesis.

¹³⁹ The male denotation again here is resonant with Kierkegaardian rhetoric and does not represent any priority regarding the gender of the learner.

¹⁴⁰ This idea is an important feature in Chapter Seven.

Thus, to consider Christian education in Kierkegaardian terms does not deny the existence of God nor undermine the value of the learning individual; rather, what is highlighted is the error of each assuming to know self and other in their entirety. As Tubbs writes: ‘the absolute in Kierkegaard as in Hegel is inequality known to itself as torn halves of a relation that does not add up to itself’ (Tubbs, 2005: 218). The inequality incites brokenness and in turn recognises the middle term. Truth is then known in the brokenness between the two partners.¹⁴¹ Again this highlights the notion of pedagogical uncertainty and in terms of a new perspective, this idea of brokenness will be explored in later chapters. The idea of a middle space is as important for Kierkegaard as it is for Hegel but here the learning partners view themselves in terms of a relation of difference. It is in the light of this relation that the significance of the three Kierkegaardian texts is explored. This exploration begins with *Either/Or*.

3.3 The subject-object relation: *Either/Or*

Either/Or is the first of Kierkegaard’s ‘aesthetic’ texts. In this text, Kierkegaard proposes contra Hegel, that subject-object oppositions must always exist. Furthermore, he argues that a choice as to how they are managed must be made. The text presents a reflection on his failed relationship with Regina Olsen, and thus equates choice in education with the choice required to leave the immediate state of romance and enter into the state of marriage. His failure to make this choice illuminated existential difficulties in his personal life, therefore, these difficulties might also be translated by the reader into the epistemological problems that arise when no choice is made. For example, he reflects on the necessity for romantic love to be transfigured, initially by doubt, into religious love. This religious state provides for its durability and certainty (Kierkegaard, 1974: 25) and as such, authenticity. But the reader must choose to choose religious love. Not to choose is to fall into sin (Kierkegaard, 1974: 142).¹⁴²

Each subject - object position is presented in the form of papers and letters. This is intentional, allowing the recipients of the letters and therefore the reader, to react to each in the light of his or her own personal contingency. As it is claimed that there is ‘no didacticism’ in this work (Gardiner, 1988: 47), the readers of *Either/Or* are exhorted, in response to the letters, to choose one position to guide their way of life. The first position is represented by the

¹⁴¹ Learning partners might be exemplified as the individual and universal, the indirect and direct, the process and the product, the author and pseudonym or finally, Kierkegaard and his readers.

¹⁴² The movement from the immediate to the religious state forms a key theme in the latter half of the current thesis. *Either/Or* does not fully explore the religious state, yet the movement described in this text introduces the movement from the aesthetic to ethical states as a precursor to the move towards the religious.

aesthetic man. This man is concerned with sensuous immediacy - living for the moment and holding fast to pleasure (Kierkegaard, 1974: 21).

In the aesthetic position, Spirit is determined as immediacy. This concerns what one is and what one lives for (Kierkegaard, 1974: 161). It concerns personality, beauty, sensuousness, transient romantic love and enjoyment (Kierkegaard, 1974: 18-21). It is for the here and now (Kierkegaard, 1974: 140). Liberated from everything established by divine and human law, all moments appear temporary, attachments are loose, and there is no certainty. This amounts to self-satisfaction which however seemingly attractive, promotes a fatalistic outlook leading to sorrow (Kierkegaard, 1974: 22). This has been interpreted elsewhere as a description of 19th Century hedonism (Gardiner, 1988: 46-7) but might also be equated with Heidegger's notion of Being as well as the ideas of scholars in Paradigm Two that deem spirituality as pertaining to the 'here and now' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 66-8; Hyde, 2008: 52).

In the aesthetic state, there initially is no movement beyond the immediate. Choices made are made for the moment only (Kierkegaard, 1974: 141). The pseudonymous author of the papers and letters suggests that for the aesthetic man, life is an illusion (Kierkegaard, 1974: 135). Living behind a mask of pleasure, his true self is not revealed. He does not know himself in truth. There is a separation between who he really is and who he is supposed to be. But a further illusion is that there is no separation. As with pseudonymity, immediacy is his mask and he lives in untruth.

In Chapter Two, immediacy was considered in terms of the relationship 'I - God' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 109). Reflecting the aesthetic position, it is now also possible to consider immediacy in terms of spiritual knowledge. In his text *The Secret Spiritual world of Children*, Tobin Hart posits examples of spiritual immediacy such as wonder and awe (Hart, 2003: 61), relationality (Hart, 2003: 69) and empathy (Hart, 2003:76) as 'sacred qualities.' His proposition that these have meaning within temporal existence validates the idea that spiritual authenticity lies within the 'here and now.' There is no need for external intervention or any movement away from the immediate. Thus, as an aesthetic teacher, and extrapolating himself from inherited forms of spiritual understanding, it might be suggested that he veils himself in order to allow for personalised learning. Spiritual pedagogy, he proposes, liberates children from the illusion of objectivity and allows them to be free in the present moment. He writes: 'The basic premise of a spiritual worldview is that all things, including us, are sacred and are infused with or part of spirit' (Hart, 2003: 9).

The ethical man on the other hand, represents the transfigured romantic who, having negated immediacy, knows himself as absolute in his eternal validity (Kierkegaard, 1974: 159). His knowledge is based on self-reflection which as Spirit, moves beyond the here and now. The ethical man also makes a choice. He chooses negation and this becomes his truth. In so doing, he acknowledges the gap between the Universal and the immediate, and as such becomes aware of himself posited against the absolute. He also recognises the illusion of the mask (or veil) which when revealed, allows for recognition of the absolute. His choice is made within the laws of necessity such as history and morality (Kierkegaard, 1974: 148), therefore has contingent influence, and as he accepts that this choice will include loss, it will also involve pain. Yet in this choice, the ethical man is transformed (Kierkegaard, 1974: 149). Kierkegaard writes:

for the choice being made with the whole inwardness of his personality, his nature is purified and he himself is brought into immediate relation to the eternal power whose omnipresence penetrates the whole of existence. This transformation, this higher consecration, is never attained by that man who chooses merely aesthetically (Kierkegaard, 1974: 141).

In a secondary source, Gardiner notes that ethical learners supersede the immediate; through self-realisation, self-knowledge and self-acceptance (Gardiner, 1988: 53), they choose the truth. It is important to note that ethical learners make the choice within the moral and intelligible frameworks provided by the practices and institutions of society, so this truth is aware of contingency. In the light of this, the learner fulfils his or her 'potentialities as a free and purposive being' (Gardiner, 1988: 56), yet posited in negative relation to the Universal.

Although at the end of Chapter Two the significance of contradiction for education was highlighted, Kierkegaard claims that the attainment of absolute knowledge is actually 'contradiction annulled' (Kierkegaard, 1974: 144). Through the negation, mediation and return of Hegel's system, history and the individual are transcended and fused in a higher unity. As each is one in the other, the need for choice is eradicated. But Kierkegaard argues that for authenticity, and before the negation, mediation and return, there must be a recognition of separation.

The choice to move to the ethical is based on the acceptance of this separation (Kierkegaard, 1974: 144-7). Kierkegaard argues that each individual has a dual existence - history and contingency - and that each should be held apart in an imperfect relational shape. This does not signify a return to the dichotomous positing of paradigms as outlined in the Literature Review. However, this does re-evaluate relation, ensuring that the truth of the learning

individual never becomes self-identical and therefore in error. This idea is significant for the current thesis and will be explored in more depth in later chapters. The movement of learning is also significant and this will be explored in later chapters in terms of the educational notions of 'Repetition' and 'Bildung.'

Another example of the importance of Kierkegaard's movement from the aesthetic to the ethical for a new perspective of Christian education, is personal transformation. As an immediate state, the aesthetic is melancholy (Kierkegaard, 1974: 158). Melancholy is later presented as despair (Kierkegaard, 1974: 158) which arises when the aesthetic becomes dissatisfied with finiteness but has not yet chosen the infinite.¹⁴³ This individual 'from a true and sincere love for mankind cast himself in the ocean of despair till he found the absolute' (Kierkegaard, 1974: 176). However, despair is not doubt and in this context neither despair nor doubt are problematic. Despair is a result of immediacy's reflection into awareness of the infinite (Kierkegaard, 1974: 176) and is the manifestation of the tension that arises when one desires to move beyond immediacy but without yet having recognised the absolute. This is an unhappy state and one to be overcome. Unlike Hegel's 'Unhappy Consciousness,' where the movement of overcoming and return to self is continuous until each consciousness finds itself in the other, this state of unhappiness needs to be sorted out.

The despair of melancholy leads to the transformation that comes with choosing the absolute (Kierkegaard, 1974: 179). Gardiner writes: 'the ethical does not annihilate the aesthetic but transfigures it' (Gardiner, 1988: 52). The progression leads through the melancholy of the immediate, continues in the despair of the separation, and arrives at the choice which posits the self in relation to the absolute. Kierkegaard asserts that to make the ethical choice is to choose repentance regarding immediacy (Kierkegaard, 1974: 183), and this is an imperative for the Christian life.

In this context, Spirit is the transforming force in the life of the individual who chooses repentance. In Paradigm One, repentance is a key theme¹⁴⁴ and it might be suggested that the movement from one state to the other and the transformation that ensues, could be equated with conversion. For scholars such as Wright and Griffiths, conversion involves the individual making a personal response to the Christian story as summarised for example in the Four Points.¹⁴⁵ As indicated in the Literature Review, this involves the overcoming of the

¹⁴³ In this chapter, the terms infinite, universal and absolute are interchangeable. In later chapters, the term 'Absolute' will represent them all.

¹⁴⁴ See page 14.

¹⁴⁵ See page 16.

separation of the individual and God, and concerns the re-ordering of one's spiritual life. As indicated here, for Kierkegaard however, separations must still exist. Transformation takes place as Spirit engages in the process of loss and return; therefore, it involves much more than a cognitive acceptance of facts. It includes loss and pain. The transformed individual returns to the contingent world; thus, rather than promoting re-ordering, Spirit inspires a new relation to both the absolute and the world.

In Paradigm Two, which avoids notions such as sin and salvation, there is no consideration of repentance. Conversion however, involves the continuation of the *a priori* relationship of the learner with God. For example, in his motto: 'who cares where the sin is' (Privett, 2009: 109),¹⁴⁶ Privett argues that transformation occurs as the individual explores, questions and learns spiritually. Kierkegaard's ideas regarding transformation however are again much more complex than the promotion of ontological enquiry presented here. The movement of repentance, which transcends immediacy and self-sufficiency and allows the individual to know God, is for Kierkegaard, a paradox. Knowledge of God here also applies a different meaning to that of Hegel's absolute knowing. Here it concerns the paradox of absolute subjectivity.

The idea of the paradox is given more attention later through the text *Philosophical Fragments*. However, in her text *Thinking Christianly about Kierkegaard* (Walsh, 2009) Sylvia Walsh wrestles with this issue. She proposes that to have knowledge of 'God' is to relate objectively to the self in self-reflection and subjectively to others including the transcendent other, who is 'pure subjectivity' (Walsh, 2009: 54). This knowledge is not unified and 'the absolute can only be for the absolute' (Walsh, 1974: 178); however, it is in the middle space that knowledge comes to have a more personal meaning.

David Tacey concurs. He acknowledges that 'the self can only come to know itself in relationship with an 'other' and without a personified absolute other the self lacks identity, definition and form' (Tacey, 2004: 156). He acknowledges that the perceived illusion of 'God' is actually also illusory and does not need to have a fixed identity for its truth. Tacey calls for the mystery of God to once more come into spiritual awareness (Tacey, 2004: 154). Additionally, he suggests the idea of God should not be constrained by human limitations but stretched to its full capacity embracing the contingency of the world, other people and personal history (Tacey, 2004: 156) in relation to its traditional form. The idea of

¹⁴⁶ See page 41.

representation, particularly in terms of a notion of 'God' is an important consideration for the proposed new perspective of Christian education and is explored more fully in chapters Six and Seven.

This epistemological conundrum signifies then that the move to the ethical as described in *Either/Or*, is not the end of the movement or indeed the consideration of the Christian life of faith. Although the theological resonances of conversion through the notions of sin and repentance are evident in *Either/Or*, and whilst man's eternal status in relation to the absolute is ascertained, this text does not provide a complete response to the research question, which considers authenticity in terms of a life of faith. In Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* (1985), one of the most significant themes is the suspension of the ethical in coming to faith, and this leads this discussion onwards. Hence this text which is explored now, highlights the themes of knowing, unknowing and error, and continues to further identify themes for new perspective in Christian education.

3.4 The leap of faith: *Fear and Trembling*

As a religious theme, 'faith' adds a new dimension to the current discussion. Introduced briefly in Chapter One in terms of the two paradigms,¹⁴⁷ including reference to faith development theory,¹⁴⁸ faith also constitutes the aim of the primary research question: to consider how a new perspective of Christian education might inspire learners to an authentic life of faith. In the light of the previous three chapters, a Kierkegaardian consideration of 'faith' now re-imagines the individual's connection with the Universal. It also looks forward to Chapter Five, in which faith will be explored more fully in terms of practice within Christian education.

Faith takes one away from cognitive choice to experience. Concerning a dimension beyond both ontology and epistemology, it supersedes dualism. As Spirit, it becomes the third partner in learning relationships.¹⁴⁹ As the third partner, rather than acting as mediator¹⁵⁰ between the knower and knowing,¹⁵¹ faith surpasses knowledge. As it is not mediated, it involves the

¹⁴⁷ See page 16-7.

¹⁴⁸ See page 18-9.

¹⁴⁹ The current thesis so far has explored the duality of two paradigms, reflected in the relation between the learner and teacher as well as learning and the learner. The introduction of the notion of faith changes the focus. Rather than exploring dualistic positions, faith now transcends these. As the third partner in the relation of relations, faith and Spirit now provide the missing dimension that is integral to the new perspective of Christian education to be proposed, and are considered the means by which learners might authentically learn.

¹⁵⁰ The role of mediator is that assigned to Spirit in Chapter Two.

¹⁵¹ The phrase 'learning and the learner' is now replaced with 'knower and knowing' due to the Kierkegaardian implication of knowledge rather than education.

mystery of the unknown (Collins, 1983: 67). This reflects the statement in the biblical book of Hebrews that faith is 'confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.'¹⁵² Thus faith is concerned with the absurd and unknowing, and is only attained through a leap away from certainty and self-sufficiency.

Faith also re-negotiates the relationships of *Either/Or*. As the individual moves away from immediacy to be transfigured in the ethical, faith as the third partner establishes a relationship with the relation of the aesthetic and ethical. Described by Kierkegaard as the religious state, this third dimension reflects the 'gigantic passion' of an ethical person who is willing to make the leap from what is known in his personal and historical experience to the unknown (Kierkegaard, 1985: 43). The leap is significant here. In terms of the perspectives already considered in this thesis, this leap might involve the movement away from commonly held truths as in Paradigm One, or from immediacy as in Paradigm Two. Yet it also might refer to the philosophies and religious expressions of thought consciousness prevalent in Kierkegaard's day which, in the leap of faith, were suspended. What is 'known,' either objectively or immediately, is suspended for the aporia that comes with unknowing, and this has significance for a new perspective in Christian education.

Fear and Trembling is written under the pseudonym Johannes de Silentio. As Gardiner points out, the author locates himself within the realm of the ethical; however, the text serves to highlight the limitations of this sphere (Gardiner, 1988: 59), thus highlighting the need for the ethical individual to make the leap of faith. The text considers the story of the biblical character Abraham. The author poses three questions, each of which point towards the experience of faith as the answer. The first question concerns the teleological suspension of the ethical. In the story located in Genesis 22, Abraham is called by God in faith to sacrifice his son Isaac as a gift offering in an act of obedience. In this act, he is led forth to go beyond what is ethically acceptable (the universal) in response to his passion for God (the absolute). He indicates his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac (the finite) and deigns to give his all, risking the loss of his son to gain eternal validity: that is to attain God's will. His willingness in faith involves superseding the ethical expression of the action – murder – in order to effect the religious expression of sacrifice (Kierkegaard, 1985: 42). This is his leap of faith.

Abraham's willingness to sacrifice illustrates how faith is not just about belief, but also action and readiness. In making the leap in faith away from what is ethically accepted, he 'waives his

¹⁵² Hebrews 11 vs 1; New International Version.

claim' to the temporal or what is morally correct in temporal terms (Kierkegaard, 1985: 54). In his willingness to sacrifice, he claims the absolute as his own. In so doing he becomes an individual in absolute relation to the absolute (Kierkegaard, 1985: 72). This again is the relation of relations. As the author claims, 'he who loves God without faith reflects upon himself, but he who loves God with faith, believably reflects upon God' (Kierkegaard, 1985: 47). The gravity of the situation is clear, as is the recognition that to make the leap of faith is a risk. The anguish of Abraham's choice and the resulting pain is not to be undervalued. Nor is it for everyone.

The pseudonymous author, from within the ethical sphere, recognises that when placed in parallel to the movement of faith, the limitations of his own position are made clear (Collins, 1983: 91). In going beyond what is palatable, de Silentio 'recognises in Abraham the presence of something which surpasses his own standards' (Collins, 1983: 91). He cannot make the leap himself: he is not strong enough (Rose, 1992: 15). For within the ethical position, he knows himself as a universal. For truth, however, the learning individual must recognise himself in the Universal.¹⁵³ As an ethical being, his ability to understand the Universal is limited by the finiteness that disallows a true knowledge of the infinite. The truth of 'his' knowledge of the infinite is knowledge of God in error. This resonates with the Kantian idea presented in Chapter Two as well as the notion of the ethical as the 'inner voice of individual conscience' (Kant, 1992: 12). As Rose writes: 'if God should really speak to man, man could still never know that it was God speaking' (Rose, 1992: 12). Gardiner suggests that seeking the infinite in the finite is an error as it never possesses any more than 'relative status' (Gardiner, 1988: 66); it subsequently corresponds to sin.

For religion to be reduced to relative reasoning is to be antithetical to its nature. Gardiner explains that for Kierkegaard, religious commitment to God should, reflecting Abraham's actions, involve the suspended personal experience of the individual, in relation with the absolute other that transcends human reasoning (Gardiner, 1988: 66). When challenging the 'self-sufficiency of morality' (Gardiner, 1988: 67) and locating religious experience 'outside the aegis of human standards of rationality' (Gardiner, 1988: 68), the individual here might experience faith. For the ethicist however, this is an impossibility. Gardiner underlines the background to Kierkegaard's propositions and suggests that the political motivation behind the statement of faith was to move the religious people of his day away from paying lip

¹⁵³ The masculine identification of the individual in this section pertains to both Abraham and the author, and for consistency, thus the individual who learns.

service to their beliefs, 'smothered by the comfortable words of clergymen,' towards something more meaningful. Furthermore, he intended to move philosophers away from the rationalisation of thought prevalent at that time (Gardiner, 1988: 60). As the leap of faith is a movement towards the acceptance of aporia, it involves unknowing. However, it is also more than this: it is a movement founded on jeopardy.

Walsh writes that the Abrahamic movement 'is a venture fraught with uncertainty, fear and trembling, lifelong striving, self-denial and suffering on the part of the single individual' (Walsh, 2009: 51). But to evade to venture in this way is to lead a religious still-life that 'avoids all risk and danger' (Walsh, 2009: 51). Walsh suggests that Christian learners should relinquish all probability in relation to a belief in God. In other words, reliance on the temporal in the form of 'lenient, comfortable religiosity' (Walsh, 2009: 52) such as doctrine and dogma, should be suspended in order to experience a relation with the eternal. Considering the telos of each of the paradigms and perspectives outlined in the current thesis, it might be suggested that the teleological suspension of their beliefs, that as already indicated each include their own version of essentiality, would allow for the interruption of their claims to truth, opening up the space that embraces aporia, and thus allowing for 'unknowing'.¹⁵⁴

This is not straightforward or easily determined but in the light of the Abrahamic story, it has consequences for authenticity. It is becoming clear that for Kierkegaard, an authentic expression of faith involves the leap of the learning individual who is a finite self (including both the aesthetic and ethical), away from the limitations of temporal (universal) aspects of Christianity, to the unknown. Whilst seemingly absurd and irrational, the unknown is absolute. How one comes to understand this in practical terms and indeed how one becomes a Christian is yet to be established and these issues will be considered later in the thesis. However, at this stage, it is necessary to conclude that in the light of Kierkegaard's writing, the spiritual educator can no longer claim the right to assert how a learner comes to 'know,' but must now consider faith in terms of what we do not know. In a new perspective of Christian education, this idea is important and will be explored further in Chapter Five.

In the movement that is the leap of faith, Abraham is defined by de Silentio as a knight of faith. This title might also be subsequently applied to the Christian learner or teacher who suspends any essential claims to truth. Descriptions concerning this knight are posited in

¹⁵⁴ This is risky and a leap that many do not or cannot consider. Yet this has significance for this thesis and will be explored in more detail in later chapters.

opposition to those concerning the knight of infinite resignation. Had Abraham retained the father/son relation, otherwise recognised as the universal/ individual, within the realm of the ethical, he would have been recognised as the knight of infinite resignation. In fact, the pseudonymous author recognises himself as such. The error of this knight is that he is only able to recognise the finite in the infinite in negative terms, therefore once suspended, his truth is groundless and the only telos is spiritual 'death.' According to Kierkegaard, such individuals are in sin (Kierkegaard, 1985: 66).

The knight of faith however oversteps the finite altogether for a higher telos. As this knight suspends the finite ethical state, he 'determines his relation to the universal through his relation to the absolute' (Kierkegaard, 1985: 82). This is not a relation of self and other that has no telos, but a relation in relation with the relation. The suspension does not lead to groundlessness, as nothing is resigned. Both positions remain. The knight of faith does not eschew the ethical; the ethical will always be there. Nevertheless, he goes beyond what is known to be good and true to recognise the truth of his faith. He finds the infinite in the finite positively. In suspending the ethical, and risking the life of his son, Abraham meets God. As Tubbs writes: 'in his anxiety he has the leap of faith that what is error will be true' (Tubbs, 2009: 135). His unethical action becomes the truth of his faith. But in his anxiety and in the moment, he leaps into the unknown in order to grasp what is known absolutely: the love of God.

Fear and Trembling states that Abraham 'believed on the strength of the absurd for all human calculation has long since been suspended' (Kierkegaard, 1985: 45). At the end of his trial, Abraham ultimately 'receives all back in full measure and overflowing' as his son is returned to him (Kierkegaard, 1985: 91). He is given a last-minute reprieve and an animal is sacrificed in his son's place. The character of Abraham as one who has made the leap of faith, makes the return to his temporal situation. He is the one who has found himself in absolute relation to the absolute (Kierkegaard, 1985: 72). The return is what distinguishes the Kierkegaardian perspective from others: for example, the knight of infinite resignation makes no return. In the return to the contingent ethical world, the transformed knight of faith understands himself more fully as a learner and understands himself and his contingent context¹⁵⁵ now on the strength of the absolute, rather than on doctrine or Being.

¹⁵⁵ The contingent context in this thesis is the Christian religion and the situations in which education takes place.

As a man of faith, he is greater than he who remained within the ethical (Kierkegaard, 1985: 70). As a learner, the knight of faith has superseded ethics, philosophy and 'comfortable' religion to meet the absolute. Within Abraham's faith resides his own truth in relation to his own experience of what he knows and understands. He is at rest. But along the way, he has encountered paradox and pain. Similarly, for the learning individual who is the knight of faith, the paradox¹⁵⁶ and pain must also be embraced.

Pain is recognised as a necessary part of the process before the leap is made (Kierkegaard, 1985: 57). On several occasions in *Fear and Trembling*, the anguish of Abraham's choice to sacrifice his son in response to God's call is made clear. Within the contradiction of the sacrifice is Abraham's love for Isaac and his fear of God (Kierkegaard, 1985: 42). Within the action comes the distress, anguish and paradox of duty and right (Kierkegaard, 1985: 76). In the face of the impossibility of a return, there is torment (Kierkegaard, 1985: 58). The drama re-enacts the paradoxical biblical theme that life must be risked in order to be gained and contra- Hegel, Kierkegaard advocates the overcoming of the bondage of death for life (Rose, 1992: 16).

For the spiritual learner, the pain of the loss of certainty must be embraced and it might be argued that without such pain, there can be no authenticity.¹⁵⁷ For Christian education, the suspension of the ethical and subsequent return highlights the relation of knowledge to the knower to be a difficult one and as addressed earlier, considers the claims to essential knowledge antithetical to a learning perspective that aims to nurture faith. To that end, the new perspective of this thesis involves the loss of certainty and in so doing, presents a riskier means of teaching and learning. Yet in the desire for authenticity, Kierkegaard's writing encourages the Christian educator and learner to make the leap.

To consider the truth of knowledge and knowing in relation to faith, Tubbs brings the discussion back to idea of the middle space (Tubbs, 2005: 228). The movement of the knight of infinite resignation might be described as linear. The movement of the knight of faith is the double movement of leap and return. For education, this movement represents the truth of learning being its relation to the learning of the truth (Tubbs, 2005: 229). Faith as the third partner of learning is the middle way that re-negotiates this relation as well as what is learnt.

¹⁵⁶ The notion of paradox is explored shortly through the text *Philosophical Fragments*.

¹⁵⁷ This idea will be highlighted again by Rowan Williams in Chapter Five.

The suspension of the ethical and its return is the truth of faith and the truth of learning as faith.

Gillian Rose proposes that this educational shape, that is the relation of relations, is triune. Faith is in the relation of the broken middle in relation to the relation between the individual and absolute.¹⁵⁸ Brokenness incites pain and this cannot be avoided. As a broken relation, it acknowledges the difficulty of the subject/object relationship but rather than seeking a resolution, it retains its inequality as an imperative. Rose posits that the broken middle re-negotiates 'the breaks between the universal and particular, inner morality and outer legality, individual autonomy and general heteronomy, active cognition and imposed norm' (Rose, 1992: xii).

For Rose and Tubbs, recognition of the struggle in the broken middle is true education. The more dangerous situation might reduce faith, promoting a perspective of learning that avoids 'the opposition which might induce process and pain, or without any risk of coming to know' (Rose, 1992: 159). Rose continues that the double danger of leap and return is actually the only undangerous position: it is one that does not liberate itself from one dominion, but submits to other (Rose, 1992: 159). Although Abraham 'grasped' the eternal, it is still unclear how God might be 'known' and this significant question is now explored through the final text: *Philosophical Fragments*.

3.5 The paradox: *Philosophical Fragments*

The conundrum explored in this text is such: how might the relationship between an individual and God be known in human existence? Walsh proposes that the aim of *Philosophical Fragments* is the passionate attempt to discover what thought cannot think (Walsh, 2009: 55). In contrast to the many attempts to prove the existence of God through (for example) the ontological argument,¹⁵⁹ in which philosophers endeavour to apply a presupposed notion of 'God' as object to the individual,¹⁶⁰ Kierkegaard recognises God as a transcendent subject that might be encountered subjectively in personal experience (Tubbs, 2009: 55).

¹⁵⁸ The triune shape is an important signpost towards later chapters.

¹⁵⁹ The ontological argument, promoted by Anselm of Canterbury, an eleventh century theologian, proposed that as God a being that while essential, exists in the mind, and therefore must exist as it is greater than the mind that thinks it (Seung, 2007: 86). Kant however critiqued this assertion. As Seung points out, Kant argues that as predicates are applied to the concept of God that is thought, God becomes a contingent being and must exist contingency. Seung writes that for Kant, 'the existence of God is already contained in the concept of God' (Seung, 2007: 87).

¹⁶⁰ Inverted commas are used here to designate the provisional label given to the transcendent object of enquiry. For Kierkegaard however, the term is used without the need for any.

Under the guise of Johannes Climacus, who according to Tubbs is the pseudonym of his philosophical doubt (Tubbs, 2005: 219), Kierkegaard considers that God might be experienced by suspending temporal notions of the transcendent as described above and bringing the learning individual into a relation with the relation. This relation of relation might also be represented by what Tubbs calls 'subjectivity's subjectivity' (Tubbs, 2009: 135). Since subjectivity per se experiences itself as groundless, this highlights the importance of subjectivity's relation with relation. This triune relation is Kierkegaard's fingerprint and representing the dialectic of self and other in relation to the absolute as the means of coming to know 'God', as Collins asserts, this 'gave a moral and religious meaning to subjectivity' (Collins, 1983: 140).

The sub-title of *Philosophical Fragments* is presented as a question: 'Is an historical point of departure possible for an eternal consciousness?' (Kierkegaard, 1974: title page). In other words, its enquiry considers whether a learning individual requires tradition and thought in order to know God. The question intimates that the author seeks to 'suspend' historical, epistemological and conventional beliefs and practices in favour of uncertainty regarding eternal. However, in order to unravel this idea, he explores two modes of thinking and learning, that is Socratic recollection and Christianity, and considers how in each the absolute comes to be known.

Socrates' ideas regarding knowledge and learning are outlined in the text *Meno* by Plato (Plato 1956), in which the former is questioned by the latter and invited to defend his pedagogical position. A more explicit outline of this text is provided in Chapter Four in the context of the relation of learning and the learner. Here however, Kierkegaard's reflections on this position in the early part of *Philosophical Fragments* are outlined in relation to the question of knowing God.

According to Kierkegaard, Socrates' negative epistemology sees knowledge as implicit. Learning is considered as an act of remembering (Kierkegaard, 1974: 11). Truth is not applied from the outside to the learner, but is drawn out from within. Thus, the teacher acts as a midwife who leads the learner into the truth of his own knowing. The truth of the knower lies in his questioning and the questioner is able to acquire the truth by recollecting and remembering (Kierkegaard, 1974: 15). Kierkegaard notes that as the individual is the centre of learning, his self-knowledge is his knowledge of God (Kierkegaard, 1974: 14). Equally, since the eternal as highlighted in his original question is already present in truth, this truth is brought to consciousness at the moment of recollection (Kierkegaard, 1974: 16).

This has resonance with examples of spiritual pedagogy in Paradigm Two, in which it might be argued, an historical departure is not required for knowledge concerning the eternal (or in the rhetoric of the paradigm, the transcendent). Rather, as according to Hyde, learners' ontological predisposition to create their own meanings allows them to recollect their own truths in the light of their own experience, albeit often at odds with the wider tradition. The teacher acts like a Socratic midwife, with acts of wondering or questioning leading learners to 'draw from an eclectic range of frameworks in order that they can create meaning for themselves' (Hyde, 2008: 120).

In order to seek a solution to his question, Kierkegaard's pseudonymous counterpart identifies that Socratic ideology is in fact inadequate and he presents three problems for learning. In the first place he considers whether the learner, being in the negative state of not-knowing before recollection, can actually possess the truth. Rather than being drawn to what he knows, recollection only serves to remind him of what he does not know. 'He is then in a state of error' (Kierkegaard, 1974: 17). Secondly, in this state of error, the role of the teacher is to remind the learner of his error. The teacher as servant pushes the learner away from himself so that the learner will learn of his own truth, but in so doing, this highlights once more that this truth is in fact error (Kierkegaard, 1974: 17).

The third problem concerns the learner. In his error, the learner is constantly in the state of departure from truth which is sin, necessitating a return through repentance (Kierkegaard, 1974: 23). This again highlights the groundlessness of the negative state and highlights the importance of the relation of the learning individual with the relation of error and truth. Albeit purporting to avoid mastery, Tubbs also incites Socrates as being a master. He is a negative master. In depriving his students of answers, Tubbs argues that Socrates only pulls the rug from under their epistemological feet, leaving them to look down into an 'abyss that threatens nihilism' (Tubbs, 2005: 219). Education then must not be groundless or negative – it must have substance.

Kierkegaard proposes that for learners to obtain truth, the teacher must bring it to them. The teacher should also provide the conditions necessary for understanding the truth in a personal way (Kierkegaard, 1974: 17) so that the truth given to them has meaning in terms of their historical and contingent lives.¹⁶² Learning in Kierkegaard is not just about gaining knowledge,

¹⁶² In Paradigm Two, the term 'condition' most often pertains to the means by which educators allow for children to make their own meaning in the light of their innate spirituality and personal experiences.

but about being transformed through reflection on the truth. Here the transformational force, or Spirit, is 'the God' (Kierkegaard, 1974: 19). 'The God,' acting as the condition for learning, prompts learners to be reminded that they are in error in their own immediacy. When they receive the truth, he provides and they reflect on this in the light of their own contingency, they can be transformed (Kierkegaard, 1974: 23). This transformation might again equate to conversion, but is considered differently here. The triune shape of the learner, 'the God' and learning, highlights a move away from the linear process of conversion described in previous chapters, to present a dialectical relation of relation. It is the conjecture of this thesis then, that in a new perspective of Christian education, transformation might occur through reflection on the learner's relation with learning about God.

This again is subjectivity's subjectivity (Tubbs, 2005: 221). Gardiner notes that the teacher who allows for this learning comes as an equal and communicates with the learner on level terms. This learning situation is now illustrated not by Socratic recollection but by the Christian idea of the incarnation. The incarnation represents God made man in Christ (Gardiner, 1988: 75). Although as Gardiner points out, *Philosophical Fragments* here does not aim to present Christianity as an ultimate answer to the question posed, it nevertheless serves to accentuate the intellectual difficulty presented by the question and stresses the epistemological problem of how the God-man relation might be understood (Gardiner, 1988: 77). The incarnation represents what Kierkegaard calls the 'Absolute Paradox' (Kierkegaard, 1974: 46). This paradox requires that the eternal enters the temporal and takes on the limits of finite existence (Gardiner, 1988: 76). As stated in the text: 'in order that the union may be brought about, the God must therefore become the equal of such a one and so he will appear in the likeness of the humblest' (Kierkegaard, 1974: 39). He suggests that it is impossible for human cognition to understand it (Kierkegaard, 1974: 46); hence this is an offense to reason (Kierkegaard, 1974: 61).

Similarly, the idea of God, not being an objective proven reality, is the unknown. Kierkegaard states that to seek to prove the existence of God would be to 'develop the ideality I have presupposed' (Kierkegaard, 1974: 52). This would be meaningless since it is only ideality in theory and offers little in terms of bringing God's existence to actuality (Kierkegaard, 1974: 53). To give the name 'God' to the unknown is paradoxical since the unknown cannot be known. In giving a name, it is reduced and expressed (Kierkegaard, 1974: 55). Yet without a name (or mark), the unknown is undistinguished and cannot be disclosed. (Kierkegaard, 1974:

57). The author then proposes that the learner should let go of the God-conception to make the unmediated qualitative leap of faith that is not in any way presupposed.

This leap opens up the 'broken middle.' The move away from subjective ideas regarding the absolute highlights again the middle space within a paradoxical triune relational shape. In this shape, self and other are brought into a relation of contradiction and reflection. Spirit as the third partner in learning highlights the significance of the paradox and in the middle space, identifies the work of reflection on the unequal relation as education. In the light of Kierkegaard's writing, it might be suggested that Spirit is the work of learning that takes place in the middle of the absolute and individual, history and immediacy, objectivity and subjectivity, and truth and doubt. Spirit here is not the affective 'heightening of awareness' introduced by Hay and Nye (Hay and Nye, 2006: 21) but in the middle space, is the means by which authentic learning takes place.

3.6 Summary

Having philosophically underlined key ideas regarding relation as well as error and truth in both paradigms, and by offering a critique of the ideas of dualism, objectivity and immediacy, it has been identified how the current discussion, through engagement with the philosophies of both Heidegger and Hegel, has paved the way for Kierkegaard. The writing of this author has emerged as having educational importance and in his consideration of faith, the Kierkegaardian texts explored so far have significance for a new perspective in Christian education. In particular, Kierkegaard's ideas encourage the Christian spiritual educator to reconsider telos. Through his teleological suspension of the ethical, his ideas transcend any claims that a life of faith is attained through the completion of a formulaic response to learning; furthermore, as a result of his view that in the leap of faith the infinite is recognised in the finite, subjective immediacy becomes inadequate. Rather, Kierkegaard's movement of faith requires a leap to the unknown that is the absolute.

Whilst recognising the oppositions of subject and object, Kierkegaard's triune relational shape, described earlier as the relation of relations, or as Tubbs proposes, subjectivity's subjectivity (Tubbs, 2009: 135), reinforces the folly of dualism. Its relationality prevents Being from becoming its own truth and the brokenness of this unequal relation disallows systemisation and conclusions. As such, it allows learning individuals and educators to suspend any claim to their own positions and perspectives, to recognise learning as Spirit in the movement beyond certainty, and to identify the educational imperative of encountering the absolute. Including

the loss of the ethical self to the absolute, and in the return to the self and the world on the strength of the absolute, the learning individual is transformed. The pain of this position cannot be ignored however, and taking the current thesis forward, the difficulties of proposing a perspective of Christian education for an authentic life of faith are reinforced.

It is necessary at this point to consider how the discussion so far is relevant to Christian education. Having identified the proposed inadequacies of perspectives in the paradigms outlined in the Literature Review, as well as the issues that arise when each are considered as sufficient in themselves, and having recognised the problems with the dualistic positing of paradigms, this thesis has philosophically explored the nature of learning as Spirit in three different contexts and highlighted the role of the relationship of self and other in coming to know. As Kierkegaardian philosophy has taken the discussion away from knowing to unknowing, as well as presenting a new educational shape, the need for Christian learning that suspends certainty is highlighted, suggesting that educator might be concerned less with teaching agreed doctrine without recognition of the contingent life of the learning individual, and more concerned with allowing learners to embrace the aporia of unknowing.

The implication of this for Christian education, is that educators and learning individuals must be willing to accept risk. Suspending the certainties that come through locating oneself within a particular paradigm, and making the leap away from the claim to the perspectives of that paradigm, education now allows for the opening of the middle space in which mediation and contingency are embraced and the illusion of the illusion is recognised. This might mean that educators refrain from presenting their own meanings regarding Bible passages or Christian teachings, allowing learners the opportunity in the broken middle not only to negotiate their own meanings, but to also critically assess these meanings and apply them to their lives in the light of the Christian tradition of which they are a part. It might also mean that space is created not only for learning to take place on the strength of an ontological predisposition, but on the strength of an encounter with the absolute (or in the context of church-based education, God). It is proposed that educators might consider how to create the conditions in which this encounter might take place. As this is addressed more fully in later chapters, a more practical outline of how these ideas might be implemented in practice will be presented in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

In order to explore what a new perspective in authentic Christian education might look like, the following chapters highlight how both a cyclic movement of learning and a broken relational shape become the basis for pedagogy that is authentic to individuals and the

tradition, as well as learners and the absolute. Each chapter has a specific focus: relation, faith and learning respectively. Additional Kierkegaardian texts present as the theoretical framework for further consideration of the research question, with secondary sources by Rowan Williams (Williams 2000; 2003) and Gillian Rose (Rose 1992; 1996), highlighting relevant theological and educational themes. This exploration of movement and relation thus paves the way for a consideration of 'Repetition' and 'Bildung' as learning tools, before outlining how a new perspective in Christian education might be described as 'Bildung as repetition.'

Chapter Four provides a more detailed appraisal of relation and in particular a consideration of the positions of teacher and learner in Christian education. It further explores ideas already introduced such as agency, power and the middle space and begins to assess how philosophical reflection might contribute new theory for practice.

CHAPTER FOUR: RELATION

4.1 Introduction

In this thesis, the idea of relation in Christian education is first introduced in the Literature Review and critiqued in terms of dualism. In dualism, two different modes of learning are presented in terms of a subject/object division. Summarising their positions in terms of two contrasting paradigms, these modes prioritise either separation or immediacy, and for pedagogy it seems that teachers must choose (Hyde, 2008: 117). The Literature Review also describes how scholars such as David Tacey and David Hay posit spirituality against religion.¹⁶³ Additionally, in other chapters, relations such as the teacher and learner, subjectivity and objectivity and the individual and absolute, are all considered either in terms of Being-in-the-world,¹⁶⁴ the dialectic of a master and slave,¹⁶⁵ or in the relation of relations.¹⁶⁶ Philosophical ideas such as misrecognition and illusion¹⁶⁷ highlight the inadequacies of dualism and the thesis to this point has considered how the self and other relation might be re-evaluated.

At this stage, and to introduce the following discussion, attention to context regarding dualism is necessary. Having identified the literature of Children's Spirituality as a framework for Paradigm Two, it is important to note that the principal texts cited ¹⁶⁸ provide the most formative arguments within the discipline. At their time of publication, each contributed something new to the discourse. What often inspired dualism was a reaction to what was perceived to be the totalising nature of spiritual education rooted in a religious tradition, resulting in scholars seeking to prioritise the holistic and experiential nature of a corporeal or affective pedagogy. This alternate approach was perceived as less dogmatic and more open-ended, thus from a political perspective, more democratic and inclusive.

It is also important to note that the significant literature was published in the decade between 1998 and 2008, most likely influenced by the publication of *The Spiritual life of Children* (Coles, 1990) by Robert Coles. This is a watershed text that for the first time, drew a distinction between religion and spirituality. Also significant was the promotion of spirituality as an educational value through its inclusion in inspection criteria for schools in England and

¹⁶³ See pages 35-6.

¹⁶⁴ See page 47.

¹⁶⁵ See pages 82-4.

¹⁶⁶ See page 85.

¹⁶⁷ See page 85-8.

¹⁶⁸ These predominant texts are authored by Hay and Nye (1998; 2006), Erricker and Erricker (2000), Hart (2003), Tacey (2004), Hyde (2008) and Nye (2009).

Wales (OFSTED, 1994: 8). Both *The Spiritual life of Children* and directives from Government gave scholars and practitioners a secular language with which to describe spirituality, and with the introduction of the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*¹⁶⁹ followed by international conferences relating to children's spirituality,¹⁷⁰ a rapid increase in interest in this area as an academic discipline took place.

As indicated earlier, Christian scholars with an interest in children's spirituality sought to negotiate the relation between the religious tradition and the spiritual life of the child by adopting a mutual dialogic approach. This is illustrated in the ideas of Rebecca Nye who considers the subjective value of the individual child in learning, still within the Christian religious tradition (Nye, 2009: 5-9). This is also evident in the educational method *Godly Play*, which aims to nurture the relationship between the individual learner and the Christian tradition for authentic spiritual development within a life of faith (Berryman, 1991: 60). As suggested earlier however, when handled philosophically, mutuality might be deemed inadequate for the task of providing a sufficient answer to the question of how educators might promote authentic learning in Christian education. Chapters Two and Three considered this in detail.

More recent literature within the discipline of children's spirituality deviates from the mutual dialogical approach. From the turn of the decade onwards, criticality regarding both mutuality and dualism entered the discourse. This is exemplified in an article by Jacqueline Watson that, although written in the context of school-based Religious Education, provides a significant turning point in the conversation. Watson critiques mutual dialogic approaches to education in a manner similar to that of Hegel. She observes that akin to community cohesion, their focus is on celebrating similarities and encouraging co-operation (Watson, 2011: 100), which she argues does not contribute to spiritual development.¹⁷¹

Rather, Watson draws on the example of inter-faith dialogue to support her thesis, which claims that differences need to be maintained. She suggests that when dialogic partners discover the value of difference, which she identifies might take place through discussion (Watson, 2011: 105), space is created in which each can evaluate themselves in the light of the other. This approach is riskier for both learners and those who provide a learning context. She advocates that what is needed is a paradigm that leads students 'towards the less

¹⁶⁹ See <http://www.childrenspirituality.org/publications/ijcs.asp> accessed on 23/03/2016

¹⁷⁰ See www.childrenspirituality.org/conferences accessed on 10/10/2016

¹⁷¹ See Hegel, 1977: 9.

comfortable aspects of dialogue in which difference and disagreement is acknowledged' (Watson, 2011: 107) and contends that this approach is transformative for each learning partner as well as education (Watson, 2011: 106).

The significance of the space highlighted here is also recognised in other academic literature. Recent articles published in the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* note how the gap between self and other inspires authentic learning and this space is recognised for example as a place of negotiation and creativity. In particular, articles consider how the middle space revises the relation of inner and outer realities and reimagines the teacher and learner separation. Published elsewhere and also critiquing dualism, popular Christian authors Ivy Beckwith and David Csinos cite John Westerhoff's assertion that failure to keep 'two diametrically opposed views in tension' is heresy (Beckwith and Csinos, 2013: 69). The authors recognise that finding a third or middle way between positions such as the traditional and personal not only re-evaluates existing paradigms but allows for the discovery of new ones (Beckwith and Csinos, 2013: 70). In their book *Children's ministry in the way of Jesus*, they suggest that 'truth is in the tension' (Beckwith and Csinos, 2013: 69), and reflecting both Watson's assertions as well the Kierkegaardian aspect of the current thesis, this paves the way for a new perspective in Christian education.¹⁷²

In this thesis, the relation of relations is considered as the locus of learning; therefore, positions are not important. Indeed, what is learnt in each position is equally unimportant. What is significant is the relation between the learner and learning (that also includes the tradition and a notion of 'God') and subsequently the means by which learners learn. This involves the proposition that learning takes place not only between the relation of self and other but equally the through the relation that transcends this relation. The current chapter, which includes ideas from Levinas as well as Kierkegaard, explores how recognition of the relation of relations that is the relation of self, other and Other, is the beginning of learning coming to know the truth of itself. This then serves to lead educators beyond what now might simply be described as dualism or dialogue, to the acceptance of a third dimension in learning.

It is clear then that the way forward for Christian education is the re-negotiation of relation. The current chapter explores both the relation of the learner and teacher as well as learning and the learner. As indicated above, Kierkegaard's writings provide relevant commentary. Furthermore, recent articles from the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* are also

¹⁷² Although Beckwith and Csinos propose the development of a new paradigm, the focus in the current thesis is on a new perspective.

cited, allowing for comment on the issues of power and control in learning as well as the promotion of the idea of a middle space.¹⁷³

4.2 The learner and teacher

An article by Christian educator Heather Ingersoll, published in the August 2014 edition of the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, describes the author's experience of the relationship between the learner and teacher in her working context, that is the Protestant American church. She incites this learning situation as reflecting pedagogical mastery, exemplified through tokenism (Ingersoll, 2014: 168), high entertainment value (Ingersoll, 2014: 167), reliance on content acquisition (Ingersoll, 2014: 167) and 'adultism' where 'practice for nurturing children's spirituality is seen in the priority of adult needs' (Ingersoll, 2014: 170). Each of these examples are highlighted as barriers to spiritual development and these she perceives, result in disengagement and disconnect on the part of young people.

In each strand, the influence of the adult in learning is strong. This is resonant of Tubbs' assertion that in this learning situation, the adult knows in advance what is to be learnt. Tubbs argues that this teacher transmits the presuppositions of a tradition or community to recipients who internalise, repeat and even imitate the information they attain (Tubbs, 2005: 69-70). The learner here might be described as a 'blank slate on which knowledge must be impressed' (Tubbs, 2005: 69). In Kierkegaard's *Concluding Scientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, this learner is illustrated as a speculator: one who 'looks on' learning. Writing with a Christian context in mind, Kierkegaard suggests that such learners accept the tenets of faith as a matter of knowing (Kierkegaard, 1992: 215) and comprehend the truth of these tenets as the truth of Christianity (Kierkegaard, 1992: 223). Everything is explained, untruth is corrected and the paradox of knowing and unknowing is removed (Kierkegaard, 1992: 219).

The situation described here is clearly reminiscent of the examples of Paradigm One practice outlined in the Literature Review. According to Ingersoll, this does not equate to spiritual authenticity. The roles of teacher and learner then must be re-evaluated. What she argues for, reminiscent of Paradigm Two rhetoric, is a counter-paradigm in which the priority lies with the learner (Ingersoll, 2014: 165). She offers the idea of the 'centralisation of child faith' as a

¹⁷³ A significant point here is that the critical voices are those of new authors. Critical evaluations do not come from within the paradigm, but from those seeking to make sense of it. Evidenced in conference papers and key note addresses, the authors cited in the Literature Review still hold to their positions. However, as will be outlined in due course, a more philosophical review of the paradigm urges scholars and practitioners to think again.

solution and as a Christian educator, she underpins her idea biblically. Citing the words of Christ, 'unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven',¹⁷⁴ she suggests that children should 'be in the midst' (Ingersoll, 2014: 172) of all Christian pedagogy, and as such proposes that children might become spiritual agents (Ingersoll, 2014: 166).¹⁷⁵

Akin to the views of Nye, Pridmore and Privett, all introduced in the Literature Review, Ingersoll's proposition prioritises the individual child without negating the framework of the Christian tradition; thus, recognition of the significance of the subjective learner's responses to objective truth claims sets her ideas apart from those of Tacey, Hart and Hyde. Her ideas however reinforce the idea from Jerome Berryman, founder of *Godly Play*, that akin to a 'player-coach,' adult educators must recognise when to take a back seat when it comes to the spiritual development of the learner (Berryman, 1991: 17); therefore, although the Christian educator and tradition play a part in learning, the power of the 'master' must be reduced.

In the light of the current thesis, it might be argued that when an intentional move is made away from authority figures in learning, the teacher becomes valorised (Rose, 1996: 5). Here control and power are re-positioned. Although the learner has more autonomy, mastery in a different form is legitimised. As Tubbs writes: 'the teacher who teaches for the freedom of the students' own learning finds herself having to use her authority over the students to do so (Tubbs, 2005: 109). This is stated no less emphatically by Hegel whose 'slave' similarly seeks autonomy (Hegel, 1977: 123). In coming to know the truth of himself, the slave attempts the death of the other. Yet the truth of the slave is that he is not free. As outlined in Chapter Two, when the slave attains his own essentiality, he in turn demonstrates mastery. His own dogmas are formed from the deconstruction of those from which he is freed. The truth of this new position is illusory (Hegel, 1977: 124). In the light of this, the idea of the agent being an authentic learner might thus be deemed erroneous, and so must be reconsidered.

Critique here is provided by contemporary Belgian scholar Matcheld Reynaert, who in the 2014 issue of the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, alerts readers to how learning in this counter-paradigm might equally be influenced by forms of power (Reynaert, 2014: 179). She argues that the freedom and autonomy of the spiritual learner is an illusion. Reynaert raises awareness of how 'nurturing spirituality' through the open and egalitarian methodologies proposed in this paradigm might indeed 'penetrate and shape the life of the

¹⁷⁴ Matthew 18 vs 3; New International Version.

¹⁷⁵ See pages 28-9.

individual in a subtle way' (Reynaert, 2014: 180). She describes how the ethos of placing the 'child in the midst' (Reynaert, 2014: 173) contains the possibility for other forms of power to be at work. In so doing, she reviews the wondering and questioning methods of *Godly Play* in which learners integrate their own feelings and ideas within the framework of a Bible story. For instance, she suggests that in this method, the direction of learning might be driven away from the tradition rather than to it, thus asserting power conversely. Too much power given to the learner she argues, is a form of spiritual abuse since learners are left to go their own way (Reynaert, 2014: 182), whilst making sense of experiences in isolation.

The reduced importance of the adult, using Nye's statement 'it is not only about words' (Nye, 2009: 29) as an example, might lead the child (or learning individual) to consider that the adult (or teacher) does not care about what he or she says, or to suppose that any religious reference point is unnecessary (Reynaert, 2014: 182). In all these examples, Reynaert highlights how over-emphasising the child as a fully free and autonomous subject might be an abuse of power (Reynaert, 2014: 183) and urges caregivers to 'be aware of the role they take in nurturing children's spirituality' (Reynaert, 2014: 185). It might be argued that complete open-endedness without frameworks and resources can cause confusion and potential personal harm. Teacher removal, whilst purporting to avoid positioning, actually reinforces a counter-spiritual position and thus allows for 'anything to become possible' (Wills, 2014: 195).

Reynaert also argues that any mutual relationship of self and other can never be fully equal. She describes how in such learning situations, one partner will always have the upper hand (Reynaert, 2014: 180). This partner will necessarily direct the learning. Furthermore, she critiques the image of the teacher as a guide who 'can best nurture the spiritual lives of children by walking with them on the journey' (Csinos, 2011: 11-2). This implies a mutual learning journey in which both teacher and learner make discoveries together as equals. Yet as she notes, power is present implicitly; the guide *does* know the way ahead and will direct the journey accordingly (Reynaert, 2014: 184). Often the safest route is taken and detours are made around difficult areas, be they issues of ethics and morals, unpalatable Bible stories or even the darker side of spirituality (Adams, 2010: 75; de Souza, 2012: 297).

Reynaert concludes that in spiritual educational practice, attention then should be given to the 'intertwinement of power and care' (Reynaert, 2014: 185). This calls for a criticality that is able to identify the illusion of agency and recognise how the proposed freedom of the learner is misrecognised. In the scenarios critiqued by Reynaert, the individual has the same self-sufficient status as Hegel's in-itself: the autonomous learner retains essentiality whilst the

dialogic learner is an entity in-itself in relation to the teacher who is also an entity in-itself. Yet as Hegel argues, nothing can be known in-itself (Hegel, 1977: 114). In both cases neither self nor other is prepared to recognise the other as part of itself and so the illusion ensues.

Whatever is posited as essential is also negated by something unessential and mediated through another. Therefore, its truth lies only in relation to 'other' (Hegel, 1977: 58). Each needs the other for its own education. What is needed then is a new perspective in which both teachers and learners are valued as a vital part of learning. Yet here, both are able to recognise the illusion of their own self-sufficiency and be prepared, as proposed by Watson above,¹⁷⁶ to accept their uneasy relation as the beginning of authentic education.

In the new perspective, neither the teacher or learner is a master: it is the absolute as Spirit that inspires spiritual growth. In the relation of relations, mastery and self-sufficiency are interrupted. In the new perspective, as will be outlined in due course, it is also the interruption of self-sufficiency on the part of the absolute that re-evaluates power in education, and this interruption allows for the work of Spirit in the middle space. This work is the education that leads to authentic learning. These ideas will be explored in Kierkegaardian terms in Chapters Five and Six. However, at this point, these propositions might also be illustrated by ideas from 20th century philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. In *Totality and Infinity* (2003), Levinas handles the issue of relation in relation to an Absolute Other.

As much as his writing is not pedagogical per se, in *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas's ideas advocate the necessity of learners and teachers recognising the relation of self with an absolute Other for an authentic understanding of the self. Therefore, these ideas contribute to the ongoing notion of a new educational perspective in which there is no master. Levinas's thinking is written in response to the philosophies of (for instance) Socrates, Hegel and Heidegger and comments on notions within philosophy such as thought and Being in terms of totality. In the light of his assertion that totality is 'the possibility of signification without a context,' he alludes to objectivity and absolutism (Levinas, 2003: 21), and representation (Levinas, 2003: 24) as examples. Additionally, the primal identity that might otherwise be translated as 'spiritual agency,' and is both essential and contextual, is as much identified with the universality of 'I' and therefore totality, as that which is absolute (Levinas, 2003: 34). This 'I' is self-sufficient: its subjective identity being its own content (Levinas, 2003: 36).

¹⁷⁶ See page 113.

Moreover, Levinas argues that even in a dialogic relation, self-reflection is evident (Levinas, 2003: 36). Therefore, he argues that this relation, illustrated above as mutual learning that might be expressed as $A=A$, equates to completion and systematisation as well as to self-certainty and totality (Levinas, 2003: 37). All these ideas are already familiar.¹⁷⁷ However, the author's intention is not to subvert these ideas nor indeed to subvert totality; his task is to reimagine them in the light of the Other that is beyond relation. This Other is infinity. Being metaphysical, Levinas's infinity is a dimension of externality that exceeds 'the knowledge of measuring things' (Levinas, 2003: 34). It surpasses the universality of the 'I' that thinks and therefore the totality of meaning that dominates Western Philosophy (Levinas, 2003: 21). It cannot be considered as in-itself but rather corresponds to the idea of the Other who is unknowable.¹⁷⁸ Therefore it breaks up any categories that the 'I' has made for itself, for example ego, and recognises its value not in-itself but in relation to Other.¹⁷⁹

Being transcendent, infinity is beyond the representation of 'other,' or as explored above, the representation of the story of God as presented in external and agreed terms.¹⁸⁰ According to Levinas, through representation, the Other would dissolve into the same, thus again resulting in a totality (Levinas, 2003: 38). Rather, the Other should not be disclosed or revealed outside of the individual as its nature cannot be made clear. Infinity transcends truth presented as in-itself and avoids any claims to essentiality. As such the representation of a transcendent Other on the part of a teacher who is a master, is a flawed representation. Yet equally as immanence, the Other cannot either be reduced to immediate knowledge (Levinas, 2003: 27) and so the self-sufficient subjectivity of the learner who is an agent is also posited as opinion and illusion (Levinas, 2003: 23). For authenticity, both teacher and learner must be brought into relation with externality.

The relation of totality and infinity is not presented as self and other in opposition; neither does it represent self *in* other or the negation of other as in the Hegelian system. Levinas's proposition rather considers the idea of infinity as that which is 'produced in the relationship of same *with* other' (Levinas, 2003: 33). He states that there is 'a gleam of exteriority in the face of other' (Levinas, 2003: 24) and as such each relates to the other face to face. The

¹⁷⁷ A similar assertion is presented in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel, 1977: 9).

¹⁷⁸ The idea of the unknowable Other is also Kierkegaardian and is considered in more detail later in the current chapter.

¹⁷⁹ The action of breaking up as cited here, is later reflected in the actions of interruption and rupture, which having theological and educational significance, are given further attention later in the current chapter as well as in Chapters Five and Six.

¹⁸⁰ See pages 78-9.

absolutely other that is Other (Levinas, 2003: 39) is 'absolute exteriority' (Levinas, 2003: 35) and entirely unknown. Therefore, the relation is imperfect. In the light of infinity, the relation includes both the same and other, and Other. This does not reflect mutual recognition or add up to a totality. The Other is irreducible, hence the 'same' has no power over this Other and vice versa. This is reminiscent of the unequal triune shape introduced in Chapter Three and subjectivity's subjectivity that continues as a recurring theme.¹⁸¹

When all ideas are founded on the idea of infinity, any self-sufficiency regarding thought, Being and representation is interrupted (Levinas, 2003: 26). The idea of interruption now highlights a significant theme in the current thesis, as any perspective, paradigm or position in-itself claimed as truth is now broken. Levinas is clear that infinity is not an end result to be attained but that which, in an intentional movement, enters the now. This entering is the movement by which the in-itself is ruptured. Learning then is not an evasion of, but an intentional move towards the Other. As Levinas asserts, the transcendent is 'other with respect to a term whose essence is to remain at the point of departure, to serve as entry into the relation, to be the same absolutely' (Levinas, 2003: 36). In summary, infinity highlights the relation of both teacher and learner with an unknowable Absolute Other who whilst remaining absolute, intervenes.

These points again resonate with the Kierkegaardian assertions of Chapter Three, and having significance for the current discussion, they will be considered again in more detail later. The movement of desire towards the Absolute Other reflects a journey towards that which is beyond definition, completion and irreducibility (Levinas, 2003: 33-5). It is important to note that the movement is *towards* the Other and not away as in the case of the agent; neither does the movement represent the overcoming of the other. The movement rather is described as 'transcendent intention' and is summarised as ethics (Levinas, 2003: 28). For Levinas, the face of the Other is the motivation for ethical action.

For a new perspective in Christian spiritual education, Levinas's ideas have significance. It might be suggested that agency such as that proposed by Ingersoll and Hyde, reduces the other to the same (Levinas, 2003: 42). This is made evident when the learner makes meaning at the expense of the adult teacher. However, Levinas argues that this freedom on the part of the learner, renounces the desire for the metaphysical relation and becomes its own truth. This also has Hegelian resonance. The 'same' must be critiqued but critique can only be

¹⁸¹ See page 106.

brought about by the Other; the truth of the individual is only evident through dependence on the other (Levinas, 2003: 43) in relation to Other. Therefore, the presence of both the teacher and learner are required in learning but their truth is only gained through the intervention of the Absolute Other.

This is illustrated by Levinas in terms of the use of the conjunction 'and' which in this context of relation, disallows the wielding of power of one term over another. He suggests that the relation of self 'and' other is like a conversation in which both partners, whilst retaining their own distinctive identities, recognise the importance of self 'and' other in relation with Other. Each partner is not a contingent formation by which one becomes the other – there is still a distance between them. However, as 'transcendence is the traversing of the distance' (Levinas, 2003: 39), the ethical movement of desire towards the Absolute Other ensures that no partner aspires to totality. The teacher-learner relation must then be recognised in relation with the Other that is both infinite and unknown.

Interestingly, religion is cited as one example of such a conversation, in which the same and other (individual and tradition) whilst remaining distinctive, still relate. Again, this has resonance with Watson's proposition introduced above, that distinctives must remain (Watson, 2011: 107).¹⁸² In relation to the Absolute, the same and other relate but not in totality (Levinas, 2003: 40). In terms of Christian spiritual education then it might be suggested that the relation of the teacher and learner relates to the relation with the Absolute Other who is unknowable and irreducible. As a result of this, any totality regarding thought, Being and representation is interrupted, allowing for the possibility of new concepts and ideas to emerge, and ensuring a pedagogical movement that is organic, fluid and open to personal and communal transformation.¹⁸³

Levinas's thinking here, whilst resonant of previous material, also provides a platform from which the process of learning can be explored. Chapter Six focuses on learning as a priority and in that chapter, the notions of the triune relational shape, the interruption of self-sufficiency and the movement to the Absolute Other are all considered. At this point however, relation is now investigated in terms of learning and the learner, including an evaluation of

¹⁸² See page 113.

¹⁸³ David Tacey's text *The Spirituality Revolution* is responsive to this idea in terms of his understanding of 'God.' Whilst not negating the idea of God, he suggests that Spirit sets free old forms of representation, changes the shape of how 'God' might be perceived and furthermore accepts that these new shapes might not necessarily be religious (Tacey, 2004: 158).

the middle space, and an identification of the significance of this space in a new perspective of Christian education.

4.3 Learning and the learner

As indicated earlier, when the learner is an agent, the need for a contingent influencer who might 'teach' by dissemination is reduced and as such the gap between the learner and teacher is minimised. Agency also questions who the teacher might be and in the light of a learner-led pedagogy, the significance of the role of an adult authority figure for example becomes questionable. As highlighted in Chapter One, learning here is inextricably linked with 'Being;' the learner comes to knowledge and understanding *a priori*, regardless of any pedagogue who might lead the way. When Being and the meaning of Being are equal (Heidegger, 1962: 27), the gap between learning and the learner is also eradicated and this renegotiates not only what truth is, but how truth is attained.

Chapter Three reflects how the Socratic method of learning is critiqued by Kierkegaard. As stated earlier, Socrates's educational ideas are founded on the primacy of *a priori* knowledge; therefore, at this point it is necessary to further highlight this pedagogical stance. An extensive description of Socrates' ideas is found in *Meno* by Plato, and to introduce the discussion regarding learning and the learner, this text is cited now.

Plato's *Meno* represents a conversation that takes place between Socrates the philosopher and Meno, a young aristocrat who has a taste for asking intellectual questions (Plato, 1956: 101). In response to Meno's enquiry as to how virtue is acquired, Socrates outlines his view of knowledge. It is a paradox. Indeed, he states that he does not know what virtue is and would not know how to recognise it if he sought it (Plato, 1956: 129).

What is important here is how the term 'know' is used and Socrates distinguishes between different ways of knowing. Facts such as dates are presented by an authority figure and recalled. Other knowledge such as virtue, religious ideas and mathematics can be known and recalled but not understood. He posits that it is only through the process of learning that he names 'recollection,' that one can fully understand knowledge and give an account of it as truth. Recollection involves latent knowledge within the individual being brought to consciousness in response to questioning or stimulation from a 'teacher' (Plato, 1956: 109-111). In recollection, learning and the learner are one: there is no gap and all truth comes from within.

Socrates illustrates recollection through an experiment involving a servant boy and his recall of mathematical knowledge. As the teacher, Socrates chooses to withhold what he already knows in order to allow the boy to learn for himself. Whilst initially not being able to answer questions about the properties of a square, as a result of a series of questions and prompts, the boy is able to derive assertions about the properties based on prior understanding. He is henceforth able to offer accuracy about them without being told. Socrates explains how recollection not only inspires the learner to search for what is not known, but also through the company of a teacher who hints, allows for learning without 'teaching' in the autocratic sense (Plato, 1956: 130).

Learning then is not just about acquiring knowledge but coming to an understanding of what has been recollected. For this, the learner must become aware of what he or she does not know in order to begin the search to know (Plato, 1956: 130). Being a negative education, the teacher's role is to withdraw in order for recollection to take place. Socrates asserts: 'watch what he will discover in company with me, though I ask him questions without teaching him' (Plato, 1956: 135) and continues: 'seeking and learning are nothing but recollection' (Plato, 1956: 130). The teacher provides the conditions by which the learner will come to understanding but it is knowledge within that is the truth.

For Kierkegaard, as introduced in Chapter Three, this idea must be critiqued. Considering in *Philosophical Fragments* how the learner comes to learn, and under his pseudonym Johannes Climacus, he opens with the question: 'how far does the truth admit of being learned?' ¹⁸⁴ Kierkegaard points out that for the Greek philosopher, 'recollection' encourages self-sufficiency on the part of the learner (Kierkegaard, 1974: 11) and so is an error. Socrates indeed is later (in *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*)¹⁸⁵ incited as a seducer (Kierkegaard, 1990: 110); in the light of this, the relation of learning and the learner must be renegotiated. Kierkegaard argues that the negativity of Socrates places the learner in a state of sin. To lead a student to remember truth reminds him that truth is already absent. The learner here not only learns that he is in error, but is excluded from the truth until the moment of learning it. Kierkegaard writes: 'as so far as the learner is in error, he might seem to be free.' He continues: 'for to be free from the truth is to be exiled from the truth and to be exiled by oneself is to be bound' (Kierkegaard, 1974: 19).

¹⁸⁴In the context of this thesis might it read 'how does a learner learn authentically?'

¹⁸⁵ Kierkegaard's *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses* is explored in Chapter Five.

It also seems that whilst seeking freedom from given or contingent truths to gaining inhered truth, in recollection, one is alienated from the truth. Here, the pre-supposed ideas of the teacher or indeed the learning context are evaded lest the learning becomes inauthentic. In the 2009 translation of *Philosophical Fragments* by Piety, Kierkegaard notes how Socrates regards contingency as a 'fooling around' (Kierkegaard, 2009: 89) and it is suggested that in this philosophy, any learning that takes place in relation to another is merely formed through 'half-baked thoughts, cheap haggling, assertions and concessions' (Kierkegaard, 2009: 90). However, the contingent dimension of the learning individual has significance here. In the light of the primary question forming the sub-heading to *Philosophical Fragments*,¹⁸⁶ the reader is led to consider the relationship between history and temporality and an eternal consciousness – in other words the relation of self and other with Other.

This is a much more complex operation than recollection. The individual's move to understanding is signified not by recollecting what is already there, but by the paradoxical action of eternity entering temporality. Similar to Levinas's individual who moves towards the Absolute Other, here the teacher moves towards the individual to fully enter the learning experience. Kierkegaard's teacher is the saviour. As a Universal, and on the strength of his love, he enters the relation and it is at this moment that learning occurs (Kierkegaard, 2009: 100).¹⁸⁷ Self-sufficient truth is ruptured. As the Other breaks through, the learner is enlightened. The moment of learning is the moment when the reality of the absolute enters the consciousness of the individual (Kierkegaard, 2009: 100).

This is a positive education. There must always be an 'other.' Whereas for Socrates the gap between learning and learner is reduced, for Kierkegaard, the relation of learning and the learner is significant. In a new perspective of Christian education proposed in the light of this, there must also be an 'other.' Both teacher and learner (or tradition and individual) play an active role in learning; yet furthermore, in their relation with the Absolute Other (or God) who is encountered in the leap of faith and brought to the relation in the rupture and return, each are made aware of the illusions of their own contingent ideas. Yet this is the learning that inspires authentic faith. The interruption of mastery and self-sufficiency allow for Spirit in the middle space to illuminate the illusion of illusion, re-negotiate existing ideas and discover new ones.

¹⁸⁶ 'Can an eternal consciousness have a historical point of departure; could such a thing be of more than historical interest; can one build an eternal happiness on historical knowledge?'

¹⁸⁷ This might be illustrated by the incarnation of Christ.

Concepts introduced here such as the rupture and the breakthrough all signpost later chapters. Through these concepts, in the light of the triune relation of relations, the learner, learning and the teacher as Spirit interrupt self-sufficiency to open up the middle space. It is proposed that the 'moment' in which the Absolute enters the relation has educational significance and this will be outlined more fully in the following chapters. At this point however, the relation of learning and the learner is considered further in terms of Kierkegaard's *Stages on Life's Way*. This text serves to take the reader beyond recollection and mutuality to recognise the work of Spirit in the middle space.

In the opening section of *Stages on Life's Way*, Kierkegaard presents five examples of the learning and learner relation. All are uttered 'In Vino Veritas,' each by a respective orator. The examples presented consider the nature of learning in terms of the relation of partners in a love affair and whilst concerning fictional characters, all have significance for education.

The Socratic idea is most closely presented by Victor Eremita. His key word is negativity and he considers how in the relationship of a woman not yet known to a man, negativity inspires self-understanding. In not-knowing her, the woman is the man's negativity, or the truth that he does not yet know. This is his education. Eremita states: 'in a negative relationship, woman makes man productive in ideality' (Kierkegaard, 1988: 59). It is her negativity that inspires him. His not having her is the impetus he needs to fight and become valiant in order to have her. His consciousness of immortality is also awakened. This is a forward movement in which the man seizes ideality¹⁸⁸ and thus understands life to be more than merely the journey towards death (Kierkegaard, 1988: 60).

This cannot be done positively since the positive, or actuality (that conceals truth) is corruptive. When she becomes his wife, she becomes known and all understanding between the man and woman is acknowledged equally (Kierkegaard, 1988: 61). His relationship with her is changed. She now seems to know 'all the tricks' and he accepts them; but these are simple deceptions. This actuality is an illusion (Kierkegaard, 1988: 62). Therefore, knowledge as actuality must be eradicated and the way for possibility now opened.

The Socratic allusion is clear, as is the resonance with the critique presented in *Philosophical Fragments*.¹⁸⁹ This movement reflects the overcoming of positivism, allowing for the deconstruction of given truths and liberation from the structures within which these are held.

¹⁸⁸ The significance of ideality is promoted further through a study of Kierkegaard's text *Repetition*.

¹⁸⁹ See pages 105-9.

It also considers negation to be necessary for truth and places the learner in a negative relation to what is being learned. Yet the woman must become the man's possibility and in order for this to happen, he must lose her. In loss however, as is evident in many of Kierkegaard's works, the absolute is intensified and the man is brought into an awareness of his own truth in relation to a higher immediacy (Kierkegaard, 1988: 62). This, highlighting the inadequacy of recollection, reflects not only the leap of faith of *Fear and Trembling* (1983), but also the idea of Levinas presented above that spiritual authenticity is gained through the recognition of other, reinforcing the notion of infinity as the Absolute Other in learning.

Another character, the fashion designer, argues that in the course of finding love, the woman must not be just an idea, but someone actually known (Kierkegaard, 1988: 65). He suggests that when engaging with a woman, a man should get to know her from the ground up (Kierkegaard, 1988: 66).¹⁹⁰ This is a practical education. However, it is no less spiritual. The speaker explains that the truth of who the woman is, revealed in her choice of attire and accessories (Kierkegaard, 1988: 69), is reflected back from the exterior to her inner self. To know her, the man must support her in her reflection and consider the importance of exteriority in her own education (Kierkegaard, 1988: 70). Resonant of Hyde's pedagogical ideas that locate education in the learner's own world and reflect on immediate experience (Hyde, 2008: 169), it might be argued that education here evades given truth.

It is the speech of the orator who opens proceedings however that inspires a new way of thinking about learning. His key words are contradiction and illusion. This 'Young man' describes the contradiction of recollection. He illustrates his idea of a backward movement of learning in terms of lovers who consider their musings on their love to only come after their falling in love (Kierkegaard, 1988: 33). He explains that recollection at the beginning of reflection actually signifies the end of the relationship and whilst fatal, this is also considered to be comic. Likewise, to identify the truth of the beginning¹⁹¹ is to attain the unknown and this cannot be brought into the present as truth. This is a contradiction but as learners in love, the protagonists remain unaware of the contradiction. This contradiction is not educative as proposed earlier;¹⁹² it is an error. The orator also illustrates illusion in terms of a puppet. The movements of the puppet are evident and its truth is pre-supposed, but as the puppeteer is

¹⁹⁰ This short phrase mirrors the title of the book 'From the Ground Up' (2005) by Katherine Copsey, that promotes an agenda of children's spirituality in Christian education.

¹⁹¹ The nature of the beginning is also considered by Rose who, in *The Broken Middle* states 'every beginning so far encountered appears as a mask' (Rose, 1992: 10).

¹⁹² See page 85.

hidden, there is no evidence for the truth of the movements. The truth of the present is obscured and identified as illusion. The puppet also illustrates the gap between reality and ideality. Negativity here illuminates misrelation and hence is illusory (Kierkegaard, 1988: 48).

This vignette presents the relation as it pertains to misrecognition. The representation of truth (as illustrated by the puppet) obscures the presence of contingency (the puppeteer) and so the truthfulness of truth is misrecognised. When the influence of mediation is also denied, this truth similarly becomes untruth. The negation of presupposed truth supposedly diverts one away from deception, but this negation is also a deception. One cannot doubt what he or she has experienced: it is true for him or her. The relation of learner and learning is then a misrelation and truth is misunderstood. The truth presented is comic since the viewer of the puppet show has no relation with the puppeteer and the learner has no relation with learning. And it is a contradiction since without an understanding of the significance of the relation, there is no space in which the truth of each can emerge.

As will be outlined in more detail towards the end of this chapter, the space is an imperative for spiritual learning. In the space, contradiction and illusion are not in error as suggested above: Spirit as the third partner in learning opens up the middle space of contradiction and illusion (Kierkegaard, 1988: 45) as a double contradiction, to ensure that their dual roles are held together in tension for authentic education (Kierkegaard, 1988: 34). The second orator in 'In Vino Veritas' highlights this further. For him, the action of reflection on illusion opens up the middle space (Kierkegaard, 1988: 45). Negativity is related dialectically to the external presentation of love (or in this context, a religious concept) and rather than achieving an end result (Kierkegaard, 1988: 36-7), learning takes place in the space between (Kierkegaard, 1988: 45). This provides an apt summary of the nature of learning and the learner in the proposed new educational perspective. This is also the reality of the middle space. The gap between positions remains, but *within* the gap is where learning, as Spirit, takes place.

4.4 The middle space

As indicated earlier, the idea of a middle space has recently appeared on the horizon of children's spirituality literature. Rather than reinforcing dualisms such as those presented in the Literature Review, theory now attempts to re-imagine relation especially in education, aiming to recognise the necessity of accepting equally valid partners in the learning process, and highlighting the significance of the space in between.

For example, in an editorial to the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, the middle space is illustrated in terms of a womb. Having distinct identities, both child and mother is in a unique relationship with the other (Hyde, Ota and Yust, 2013: 304). As the space between them, the womb provides the environment which is the locus of self-discovery (Hyde, Ota and Yust, 2013: 305). As provider of the space, the adult has a 'peripheral rather than central' role and as in the notion of the player-coach presented above (Berryman, 1991: 17),¹⁹³ contributes when necessary. Writing as adults involved in education, Hyde, Ota and Yust personify their proposition and write:

by imagining ourselves as the spaces and elements that hold children while they are becoming themselves, we allow children and their spiritual work to be at the heart of children's spirituality rather than a by-product of our own creative efforts (Hyde, Ota and Yust, 2013: 305).

In a subsequent edition of the same journal, Tony Eade extends this by proposing the metaphor of a 'hospitable space' (Eade, 2014: 241). Reminiscent of the mutual relation of *I-Thou* proposed by Martin Buber (Buber, 1970: 58),¹⁹⁴ this space allows for individual search as well as positive inter-personal encounters (Eade, 2014: 242). Reflecting the relation of self and other as mutual learners (be they the learner and teacher, or learning and the learner), the space might also be exemplified by a physical environment such as a classroom or church, or even the space between the past and present. For Eade the significance of the space is its role in allowing learners to feel protected, able to explore their own ideas freely. As with the womb, the hospitable space might provide for safe self-discovery (Eade, 2014: 245-6) within relation as variously illustrated.

For Christian education specifically, at the *Fourteenth International Conference on Children's Spirituality*, Karen-Marie Yust addressed the notion of 'middle space' in terms of the space between inner and outer expressions of spirituality. She presented the idea of 'interplay,' which as a movement back and forth between the two, involves the construction of religious identity as an aspect of a child's social identity. It thus respects both the prior spiritual state of the child *and* the stories, practices and rituals of faith. The outworking of interplay¹⁹⁵ becomes manifest in the space between the two.

¹⁹³ See page 116.

¹⁹⁴ See page 73.

¹⁹⁵ Interplay as an educational movement is described in more detail in Chapter Six, specifically in relation to the ideas of German educator, von Humboldt.

As a critical response to a welcome turn in the direction of Children's Spirituality literature, it might be argued however that whilst proposing a relation of self and other, these examples perpetuate the dichotomy. As the child is the learner and the adult the provider, theory does not extend to accepting that the adult might also be a learner. Whilst the space allows for the child to be a part of the adult, the adult is not recognised in the child. The learner here is not open to self-examination in the light of the relation, and residing within a relation of mutuality, the space is enclosed.

It might be suggested then that the enclosed environment or framework that supports the learning also legitimises any meaning made. Whilst in the context of the current thesis it might be argued that a religious framework could provide a helpful support, one must also, considering the impact of the lack of criticality especially in Yust's example of interplay, be concerned that a learner is able to construct his or her own theological or ideological views without intervention. It could also be argued that the examples of relation are two dimensional, reflecting a movement between partners much like recollection. Furthermore, there is no dimension that might be termed absolute (or Universal).¹⁹⁶ As will be examined in the light of Kierkegaard's *Repetition* in Chapter Six, this is insufficient for faith. The movement of repetition, resonant of ideas explored in this chapter not only takes place between relational partners but also beyond relation.

The middle space here is one of status quo. However, in *Philosophical Fragments*, Kierkegaard takes a different view. As indicated earlier, learning for Kierkegaard is a paradox. In this text there is also an intervention. He draws on the moment of the eternal entering temporality to illustrate how learning involves more than the movement of one to the other. To the modern learner, eternity entering temporality equals impossibility. However, for authentic learning one must live within the tension inspired by this impossibility. This Kierkegaardian view of learning therefore adds another dimension to relation in education. Whilst in each example of

¹⁹⁶ This is illustrated by Yust who in both the conference paper referenced in this chapter and her popular book *Real Kids Real Faith*, highlights the importance for Christian faith development of the interplay between the child and aspects of liturgy or practice. She describes such development as the 'cultivation' of Christians which might be outworked through learners acquiring Christian language, engaging with spiritually edifying texts and experiencing symbolic objects (Yust, 2014). In her text, she also presents a number of activities inspired by interplay and examples include creating 'care-bags' for children in hospitals (Yust, 2004: 154) and cleaning up a playground (Yust, 2004: 155). It might be argued that the interplay here which takes place between the learner and tradition is enclosed and without the dimension or intervention of an Absolute Other who might interrupt the interplay to inspire new meanings or interpretation of the tradition.

the middle space provided above there is no tension or impossibility, a Kierkegaardian education is the pain and impossibility of the paradox.

4.5 The Paradox

Akin to the ideas of Levinas outlined above, the notion of the unknown Other especially in Christian education, takes learning beyond the process of gaining facts or accepting what is presented or 'known.' To learn spiritually is to accept that the Other cannot be 'known' in the epistemological sense and this inspires faith. It is through the paradox that the idea of faith enters the discourse of this thesis. As noted in Chapter Three, faith takes the educator and learner beyond any sense of 'coming to know.'¹⁹⁷ The paradox of faith is about embracing the known on the grounds of experiencing what is unknown. In the paradox, the halves of the broken middle are presented as a relation and as Tubbs explains, rather than uniting or enclosing, the paradox keeps this relation open (Tubbs, 2005: 218).

The Other here might be referred to as 'God' - but this is only a name. Indeed, the folly of proving the existence of God is highlighted (Kierkegaard, 2009: 113). As Kierkegaard proposes, the learner must embrace the difficult relation of the individual to the unknown. This is the paradox - the eternal exists, but as unknown it does not exist. Kierkegaard writes: 'the individual, if he is truly to come to know something about the unknown (God), must come to know that it is different from himself, absolutely different' (Kierkegaard, 2009: 119).¹⁹⁸

The understanding cannot come to know this itself – it needs God to bring it to him.

Kierkegaard writes: 'one needs God simply in order to come to know that God is the different, and now comes to know that God is absolutely different from himself' (Kierkegaard, 2009: 119). A contemporary translation of this paradox is provided in terms of the notion of the 'broken middle.' This is significant for an understanding of how learning must recognise the unequal relation of self, other and Other, and is considered further now.

4.6 The Broken Middle

The term 'broken middle' is essential for this discussion. Taken from Gillian Rose's text of the same name, the broken middle challenges dualism and is the converse of mutuality. In her

¹⁹⁷ See page 102.

¹⁹⁸ This epitomises Kierkegaard's view of faith. Faith as a concept, rather than tradition, religion or even Christianity, is soon to become a key element in the current discussion. Chapter Five gives further attention to this concept including an appraisal of how one might learn for a life of faith.

book, Rose cites the absurdity of reconciliation or totalisation (Rose, 1992: xii) and argues that more important than the essentiality of the partners in learning, is the middle term by which they meet.

Rose's middle is not an enclosed space such as the womb. Rather she proposes that the broken middle of self and other might be illustrated as a Janus-face (Rose, 1992: 52) whose dual-directional view claims neither partner for truth (Rose, 1992: 54). This then evades the reconciliation of subject and object and any form of unity. It might be equated to the educative relation of double contradiction inspired by the puppet show in 'In Vino Veritas' highlighted above. The middle is not about mutuality, but misrecognition (Rose, 1992: 14). The idea of the broken middle, in contrast to the middle space that is enclosed, now highlights how the relation that is a misrelation (or paradox) in fact has educational significance.

In the broken relation, the beginning or absolute in-itself is an illusion. The presupposition of its absoluteness in relation to its subjective representation is illusory whilst the illusion of the in-itself also makes an illusion of subjectivity. This is the illusion of the illusion. For Rose, and as stated earlier, illusion has educational value. Just as both Kierkegaard's puppet and pseudonyms provide the illusion necessary for authentic education on the part of the learning individual, Rose proposes that more illusion is required (Rose, 1992: 10). Being the negativity of the illusory absolute, the individual is able to re-imagine his or her self in relation to the illusory in-itself and as illusory being, more easily understand thought as a possibility of a beginning.

This idea is taken from Hegel who in *Science of Logic* describes this relation. In his consideration of the question 'With what must the science begin?' he considers the nature of the in-itself in relation to the individual. In so doing he claims that there is nothing that does not equally contain both immediacy and mediated knowledge. The beginning, whilst 'at one with its self-alienation' therefore immediate and pure (Hegel, 1969: 69), is at the same time recognised by the contingent 'I'; it therefore becomes the unity of being and nothing (Hegel, 1969: 73). As illusory, the pure in-itself is mediated by the 'I' that as subjectivity is also illusory (Hegel, 1969: 76); in turn this illusion is reflected back to the 'pure nothing' (Hegel, 1969: 73) so that 'that which forms the absolute beginning must likewise otherwise be known' (Hegel, 1969: 74). This continuous movement of immediacy, mediation and illusory being ensures that the beginning is always present, yet as the relation with the 'I' ensures that it is absolutely mediated, it is never fully known (Hegel, 1969: 76).

The paradoxical nature of knowing described here proposes that inherited concepts are constantly broken and re-worked. Additionally, in the loss of the certain, absolute meaning can only ever be noted, not represented (Rose, 1992: 16). However, being the place of pain and loss in relation to the absolute (Rose, 1992: 18), the middle becomes the space where the self is open to other and each is welcomed in the other. The paradox is this: the beginning, or absolute, enters into the act of coming to know (Rose, 1992: 42). As a result, the self is transformed.

As a Janus - faced relation, learning is the recognition of misrecognition. Subjectivity's subjectivity is a movement of faith that accepts opposition and subsequently loses the essentiality of the self. Spirit as the third partner in the middle between knowing and unknowing, also has a significant role in learning. It is through the Spirit in the relation of relations that one comes to learn and this is authentic education. It is argued therefore, that this is more complex than the relation symbolised by the womb in which the role of pain is misrecognised¹⁹⁹ and more precarious than the idea of hospitality that seems to be antithetical to the risk of loss. The broken middle is a relation of risk, pain and uncertainty, but as such provides a template for an authentic relational shape.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the idea of relation, having been taken from a simple dichotomy to that which includes contradiction, illusion and loss in the light of the intervention of an Absolute Other, now highlights a new educational relational shape. In this shape, the contingent dimensions of self and other are not negated; neither are they unified. Rather, in a dialectical relation with the Other who is infinite, the personal and traditional, the teacher and the learner as well as learning and the learner are all re-imagined. In the paradoxical middle space of contradiction between self and Absolute, new learning might take place. This is the significance of the proposed new perspective in Christian education: learning takes place in the broken middle of self and other, on the strength of the Absolute who intervenes.

As in most Kierkegaardian texts, the ideas of tension, brokenness and loss have educational significance. These themes feature more prominently in the following chapter as does the moment of learning identified by the rupture that opens up the middle space. The rupture is illustrated by the breakthrough of the eternal into the temporal as evidenced in the Biblical

¹⁹⁹ The safety of the womb is illusory given the pain for both mother and child that comes from the inevitable exit from the womb in birth.

stories of Job and Abraham. In the light of these stories, the discussion continues to consider what the interruption in contemporary learning might look like, signposting further conclusions regarding a new educational perspective and locating these in practice. It might be suggested at this point, that to embrace illusion and mediation and to open up the precarious middle space, is to welcome transformative learning. This provides another step in the consideration of how a new perspective in Christian education might inspire an authentic life of faith and is outlined more fully now.

CHAPTER FIVE: FAITH

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter Four, the importance of the paradoxical relation of self and other was highlighted. Drawing on ideas from Levinas and Kierkegaard, it was acknowledged that through a relation with an Absolute Other, authentic learning might take place on the grounds of the Absolute who is unknown. This idea of the unknown, which relates to the aporia identified in Chapter Three,²⁰⁰ now paves the way for a deeper exploration of 'faith' as a concept. As a key element in the research question, faith concerns the aim of education in the proposed new perspective and therefore is considered philosophically here. In addition to this, the current chapter considers the significance of the moment of breakthrough in faith education, and again explores these ideas in the light of the writings of Kierkegaard.

Faith surpasses knowledge (Kierkegaard, 1985: 67). Reflecting the biblical maxim introduced in Chapter Three: 'faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see,' it involves a movement to the unknown and a return on the strength of a relation with the Absolute. In regular parlance, the term is used in a number of ways. First it might be recognised as a noun such as 'The Christian Faith' or as a possession, that is to 'have faith.' It might also be described as an action - for example, living a life of faith. Faith is furthermore connected to trust and by inspiring a connection with or belief in something that cannot be seen, it concerns one's capacity to journey beyond corporeal experience towards an encounter with something 'other.' Finally, it is connected to belief in this unseen 'other;' this of course in Christian education concerns a deity, but equally could represent an ideology or political system (Bridger, 2000: 111). In the section that follows, the notion of faith in Christian education is critically considered in terms of the movement of faith development.

5.2 Christian Education and faith development

In terms of faith development in Christian education, the notion of faith is considered by three Christian educationalists in particular: John Westerhoff, author of *Will our children have faith?* (1976), Francis Bridger whose text *Children Finding Faith* (2000) is still a key text for Children's Ministry students, and Karen-Marie Yust, co-editor of the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* and author of *Real Kids, Real Faith* (2004). All three authors have already been introduced in this thesis and each proving influential in their respective fields, they collectively

²⁰⁰ See page 102.

summarise a broad understanding of faith development within the church. With the latter two authors being explicitly inspired by the former, commonalities are evident across their texts, providing an introduction to faith development as the aim of learning in a Christian education context.²⁰¹

Westerhoff begins by making the distinction between religion and faith, so that Christian teaching is not 'about' faith but about providing the opportunities for faith to be experienced and lived out. He describes it as an action based on an encounter with the divine (Westerhoff, 1976: 22). With this he provides an ontological starting point. Using a generic application of the term 'God,' he asserts that all people are essentially created to relate to God and others as an aspect of being human. There is no sense of being outside this relationship at the 'beginning of faith' (Westerhoff, 1976: 33) or indeed life; human connection with the divine remains a constant throughout one's life. Yust and Bridger concur. The ontological element is evident in both authors' texts, each of which describes faith as a gift (Yust, 2004: 4; Bridger, 2000: 46). The idea of *imago dei* from Genesis 1: 27 is a clear influence.²⁰² Yust notes faith as being present from birth (Yust, 2004:4) and Bridger describes how this ontological state provides the potentiality for a life-long spiritual exploration (Bridger, 2000: 47). Yust explains that the gift of faith embodies God's grace and this is reflected in 'his' choice to be in relationship with 'his' created beings (Yust, 2004:5).

Yet faith involves more than ontological privilege. Faith development concerns the will of the individual, and Westerhoff describes the life of faith as a pilgrimage (Westerhoff, 1976: 89). Westerhoff is well known for his theory of faith development which as a linear trajectory demonstrates the learner experiencing different styles of faith. As already highlighted in the Literature Review,²⁰³ Westerhoff's aim for education as faith development is for learners to have a faith that is 'owned' (Westerhoff, 1976: 39). Owned faith is reflective of a meaningful encounter with God, the result of which is an authentic Christian life (Westerhoff, 1976: 41). Faith development starts with the innate capacity for faith held by each individual (Westerhoff, 1976: 90) and akin to rings on a tree (Westerhoff, 1976: 89-90), the learner transitions through each style, culminating in owned faith. Whilst in all stages the learner has faith, in owned faith it becomes personal and a transformation occurs. This transformation manifests a change in the way the individual lives (Westerhoff, 1976: 98). The author

²⁰¹ See page 14.

²⁰² Genesis 1 vs 27; New International Version. 'So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them'.

²⁰³ See pages 18-9.

emphasises that this change occurs within the life of the learner and is not imposed from without (Westerhoff, 1976: 98).

Yust's description of faith development might be considered reflective of Westerhoff's transitions; illustrated as a journey from gift to action, Yust's idea embraces the same ontological starting point, with its telos similarly aspiring for transformation. Being relational, this requires the participation of others (Yust, 2004:13). She outlines how faith develops through 'cultivation' activities facilitated by parents, teachers and adult friends (Hyde, Ota and Yust, 2013: 303-4). For example, these adult learning partners might provide soft play toys or musical instruments to illustrate a Bible story (Yust, 2004:37) or encourage learners to write prayers inspired by the Psalms (Yust, 2004:110).

As suggested in Chapter Four, according to Yust, it is not the role of adult learning partners to provide answers to questions of faith. In a means similar to the dialogical process of 'wombing' described earlier, their role is to frame learning. Yust writes that adult learning partners 'must allow for (the holy) and seek relationship with it' (Yust, 2004:19). Yust insists that it is through engagement in spiritual practices that take into account a learners' age and stage that faith is inspired (Yust, 2004:12-3). Dimensions of community life such as belonging, giftedness and hope provide the conditions in which faith might grow (Yust, 2004:14-7).

Bridger explains how through educational dimensions such as the imagination (Bridger, 2000: 51), story (Bridger, 2000: 66) and play (Bridger, 2000: 71), the individual can explore aspects of faith within everyday experience. He argues that the process of faith development is multi-dimensional (Bridger, 2000: 97-101). The individual learns through investigation. Being a personal journey, each comes to understand 'the faith' on his or her own terms. Furthermore, according to Bridger, in faith the individual on the basis of the condition and gift, also moves towards a personal experience of God. He writes: 'the exercise of trust within the divine covenant is thus wholly a matter of grace' (Bridger, 2000: 56). This has reminiscence of Levinas's movement towards the Absolute Other. It highlights the dimension beyond the enclosed relational space described at the end of Chapter Four, and demonstrates how the individual might move beyond temporality to a transcendent experience of faith as trust.

Whilst influential in Christian educational settings, these ideas are nevertheless open to critique. First, although purported to be open-ended, the movement of faith development has a conscious aim, that is the ownership of faith. The movement towards owned faith is an intentional action on the part of the educator; for this educator, trusting in the reality of the

absolute and claiming this for oneself, equates to conversion. However, claiming might also be described as 'possession' and this is antithetical to what the current thesis considers to be authentic. Although it has been already highlighted how in *Fear and Trembling* Abraham 'grasped' the eternal, here it might be argued that possessing has connotations of the fixed representations critiqued in earlier chapters, and so must be interrupted.

All three authors are clear that ownership of faith includes the acceptance of the contents of given doctrine. This also involves the claim to certain methods and practices. This places faith in the realm of what is known rather than unknown. Although it is noted in the Literature Review how Bridger provides critique from within Paradigm One,²⁰⁵ he also writes: 'the content and object of faith make all the difference' (Bridger, 2000: 111). He outlines how formative life experiences provide the foundation for certain beliefs. For example, he indicates that putting things right when a relationship is broken, paves the way for 'repentance and reconciliation.' (Bridger, 2000: 75). He also illustrates his understanding of 'conversion' in terms of repentance and surrender to Christ, a change in allegiance to Christ and transformation through the Holy Spirit (Bridger, 2000: 154-5). These doctrinal statements are reminiscent of 'The Four Points'²⁰⁶ outlined above; hence the conversion that is a result of owning faith has theological implications for the learner. As will be outlined in due course, for Kierkegaard, conversion pertains to a reworking rather than a possessing of the contents of faith.

The role of the teacher here is also to be critiqued. Although arguing for an open-ended approach to learning, Bridger states that in the context of inspiring owned faith, the teacher 'must preach Christ in such a way that his hearers may come to own a new faith in him' (Bridger, 2000: 112). This resonates with the transmissional pedagogy of Paradigm One and incites mastery. Whilst the teacher provides the conditions for the exploration of faith, and although learning is experiential, it seems that for faith to become owned, the contents must be possessed. Again, as will be explained later, this is considered erroneous in the light of the current thesis. The Kierkegaardian idea of the condition that is the locus of learning will be explored in the following chapter, and this re-evaluates the relation of the teacher and learner in an education for authentic faith.

Whilst advocating an open-ended approach to faith development, Yust reflects how in spiritual practice, children are to be immersed in the culture of Christianity as a way of

²⁰⁵ See page 22.

²⁰⁶ See page 16.

accessing the spiritual (Yust, 2004: 70). She encourages educators to teach hymns, model the movements of worship such as kneeling and eye closing, and repeat familiar words such as *hosanna* and *hallelujah*. Here again the teacher is the provider and mastery is in evidence. Practices such as silent prayer, meditation and praying using art are also encouraged and in this way, she suggests, children might be encouraged to interpret the life of faith personally, so to make meaning for themselves and others (Yust, 2004: 92). However, meaning is made within the enclosed space of pre-determined practices which it might be argued, whilst being useful in encouraging prayer and worship, are not essential to a life of faith.

This approach highlights immediacy, which might be recognised as an illusion. As highlighted in earlier chapters, immediacy as truth is actually a misrecognition of truth. Immediacy negates the ambiguities of faith. What is possessed, whether the absolute or an understanding of the absolute, is reduced to doctrine and practice. Rather than being a means to an end, the activities or practices become the end in themselves. Although the proposed telos is a deepened understanding of the absolute as embodied in the culture of Christianity, it is a deeper understanding of the *contents* of Christianity that is in evidence here. The absolute as a result is misrecognised and misunderstood.

Likewise, faith development as outlined here is a person-centred movement that is linear and forward facing. Bridger describes the process as a move towards the absolute on the strength of the gift of grace (Bridger, 2000: 155). Learners, guided by the teacher, make their way to the desired owned faith, resting on the gift of the relation with God that is already present. When claimed, faith then becomes a possession. The individual comes to understand the infinite in terms of the finite and learns to live accordingly. As critiqued in Chapter Three, the linear movement is inadequate. For authenticity, there must be a sense of the individual understanding the absolute in-itself as illusory and experiencing the tensions that arise from embracing the absolute as both known and unknown. These ideas are addressed in Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* and a brief return to this text now serves to illustrate how authentic faith involves embracing tension and loss.

Fear and Trembling, which depicts a process laced with torment, sheds light on the inadequacy of the linear movement. According to pseudonym Johannes de Silentio, faith pertains to belief and action on the strength of the absurd (Kierkegaard, 1985: 38). This is not a linear movement towards claiming what is 'known' of the absolute. It is a movement towards the unknown. Likened to the movement which the author describes as a movement of resignation (Kierkegaard, 1985: 38), de Silentio claims that the linear movement does not

inspire faith but is a substitute for faith (Kierkegaard, 1985: 37). Here the learning individual is self-sufficient and knows what he or she believes. The learner is at rest. The knight of infinite resignation claims to surrender everything infinitely (or believes in God) but takes everything back finitely (Kierkegaard, 1985: 44). This individual is not able to make the leap beyond the finite and therefore invests in temporality, with all its assurances and security (Kierkegaard, 1985: 47).

de Silentio's faith however is characterised by a movement of loss and return (Kierkegaard, 1985: 53). Using the Old Testament story of Abraham as an illustration, he outlines how in faith, the individual is willing to sacrifice individuality for the eternal. In the context of Christian education, this might involve the sacrifice of the contents of faith as much as the will of the individual learner. The leap of faith is riskier than the linear progression. The leap negates the claim to meaning: all that is believed and understood is lost. However, in making the leap, the individual comes into an experience of the absolute that is undefined and way beyond any finite knowledge or representation. The absolute is not owned or possessed, but rather encountered. This encounter highlights another significant theme for Christian education and will be explored in the following chapter.

In the leap, human calculation is suspended. Abraham's action in sacrificing his son is totally unethical. It makes no sense. It is absurd. But faith cannot be gained by the movement of the individual who is unacquainted by life's dangers (Kierkegaard, 1985: 35). It rather concerns the willingness of the individual to go beyond the temporal and ethical, to meet what God requires (Kierkegaard, 1985: 37). The torment involved demands that faith involves paradox and pain as well as contradiction and unrest (Kierkegaard, 1985: 38).

In a forward facing movement however, there is an absence of contradiction. As proposed above, contradiction is a requirement in the authentic movement of faith. Yet the self-sufficiency of the individual who learns in a linear manner, reconciles the individual with his own existence (Kierkegaard, 1985: 48). There is no separation between self and other. Neither are the individual and eternal lost to each other. There is no allusion towards education as aporia and there is safety in the contents and religiosity of 'The Christian Faith.' The absolute, perceived as a reality, is reduced to the finite, thus becoming possible and known. Yet Kierkegaard's knight of faith concerns the paradox by which the individual strives for the impossible on the grounds of the unknown. This individual suspends everything infinitely and in so doing exposes a gap between himself as the learner and the Absolute Other who is unknown.

This suspending involves a leap away from temporality and all its certainties: the self-sufficiency of the individual is surrendered. It also moves the individual away from claiming the truth of the eternal. Kierkegaard writes: 'Through faith I do not renounce anything, on the contrary in faith I receive everything' (Kierkegaard, 1985: 55). Faith as such becomes the third partner that allows the learning individual to suspend the ethical and meet the absolute. This is the truth of faith: the absolute whom the individual encounters through the leap of faith, is the unknown. Faith is required to meet the unknown (Kierkegaard, 1985: 55). And it is faith, on the strength of the absurd, that is the unknowingness of the absolute that allows the individual to make the leap (Kierkegaard, 1985: 54).

This provides another illustration of the educational shape that is the relation of relations, or the relation and self and other with Other. The temporal self, in relation with the ethical state (that is suspended but not renounced), through the leap of faith, comes into relation with the Other who is the absolute. But faith here, again unlike the linear movement described above, involves a return to the self and the temporal ethical world. Abraham received his son back following his ordeal. As Kierkegaard explains: 'it takes a paradoxical and humble courage then to grasp the whole of temporality on the strength of the absurd, and that courage is the courage of faith' (Kierkegaard, 1985: 55). On the return, what was understood or believed finitely within temporality is now interrupted. The return from the leap of faith allows the learning individual to receive and embrace these truths differently in the light of the intervention of the Absolute and rather than claiming or renouncing, the individual might experience them personally and in freedom.

Kierkegaard's ideas in *Fear and Trembling* outlined here, further support the proposal of a new perspective in Christian education. In this new perspective, what is 'known' must be suspended so that the learner might embrace the unknown. As such, claims to the importance of methods and models of practice should be laid aside. Thus, the hymns and prayers of Yust, the preaching and proclaiming of Bridger, as well as models cited here such as *Godly Play*,²⁰⁷ beach missions and others, that all pertain to temporality, must be surrendered so that the Absolute, who is infinity, might intervene. Additionally, the movement of leap, loss and return supports the notion that the linear progression of faith development, which concludes in the grasping of the contents of the faith, is inadequate. For authenticity, the contents, knowledge and beliefs, whilst important, are not the means by which an individual comes to faith. The Christian educator in a new perspective then must consider these contents as the platform

²⁰⁷ See page 41.

which learners might surrender in order to encounter the Absolute, and that to which on the strength of the encounter, they return transformed.²⁰⁹

Kierkegaard's text highlights then how perspectives in Christian education that concern the application of ideas about 'God' or 'faith' as certainty, cannot fully embrace faith as a reality. Furthermore, educators whose perspectives consider such representations of the absolute to afford salvation (Bridger, 2000: 113), must now reconsider how the absolute is brought into temporality, let go of such preconceived (thus illusory) labels, and re-examine the notion of salvation. For authenticity, in the new perspective, the teacher is Spirit who inspires an encounter with the Absolute. It is suggested that, in the light of ideas explored here, it is this encounter, in the moment of learning inspired by the intervention of the Absolute, that affords salvation and therefore inspires an authentic life of faith. In Kierkegaard, it is uncertainty regarding the Absolute that is crucial in learning and this is considered more fully now in the light of more contemporary theory.

5.3 Certainty and uncertainty

In his text *On Christian Theology*, Rowan Williams explores the issue of uncertainty and suggests that believers coming to faith should venture 'beyond the easy and familiar' (Williams, 2000: 23). He proposes that faith begins with loss and here the loss is death. Williams writes from within a Christian context and as such his ideas have theological resonance. For example, as the physical death of Christ embodied the end of a religious paradigm, he suggests that death serves as a metaphor for the dissolution of all that is believed and understood. When there is no certainty, faith cannot be possessed and 'we are left with no firm place to stand' (Williams, 2000: 83).

From the perspective of Christian theology, Williams's text further illuminates the ideas presented in the previous sub-section, and underlines the significance of unknowing. It also promotes the notion that for authenticity, the contents of faith must be reassessed. Williams argues that in the light of the death of understanding, religious concepts and idioms cannot be legitimised and it is harder to talk about God (Williams, 2000: 84). Doctrine is considered empty and destructive when it is deemed to be the solution to the complexities of faith (Williams, 2000: 84), and it is argued that dogmatic ideas should be reviewed. Williams also critiques subjectivity. He writes that the 'shape of faith is determined in a life lived away from

²⁰⁹ It might be suggested that the learner, on the strength of the encounter with the absolute, views the contents of the Christian faith differently – more authentically – and is able to understand them in a way that is more personally meaningful yet without becoming purely subjective.

our own innate person-centred resourcefulness and self-understanding' (Williams, 2000: 83). Much like Kierkegaard, coming to faith for Williams includes questioning and provisionality, as well as the pain and suffering that accompanies the loss of fixed absolutes. Silence and powerlessness instead provide an alternative to immediacy, and when the individual makes the leap from the self, the uncertainty they afford ensues (Williams, 2000: 84).

The loss of absolutes and subjectivity is equated to a death. As described above, the death represents a surrender to the Absolute, not death in a nihilistic sense. In Kierkegaard, following the (surrender to) death is a return. This is illustrated by Abraham in the Biblical story who, as willing to surrender his son, ultimately receives him back. Yet more poignantly, the death and return might be signified by the death and resurrection of Christ.²¹⁰ Williams proposes that the resurrection brings freedom to renew and absolve (Williams, 2000: 84), 'so that what becomes possible in (Christ's) renewed presence after Good Friday has the character of a wholly creative *ex nihilo*' (Williams, 2000: 83). This reflects the ideas regarding a new perspective of Christian education suggested above. The movement of the incarnate Christ, who having surrendered to the pain of death to embrace eternity, dwells again amongst humanity. His return brings new life. As such for education, the learner surrenders to the absolute; on the return to self – or the contingent realm of the faith 'tradition' - the learner has new life. Faith is renewed and a life is changed (Williams, 2000: 86). This is transformation through which it might be argued, the learner is saved.

Williams explains that as with the *ex nihilo* of Genesis 1,²¹¹ the outcome of the return to each individual following resurrection is unknown and cannot be pre-determined. This also has implications for Christian education. Williams writes about the contents of faith for example. He suggests that rather than bringing one to judgement, doctrine 'should give place to the freedom of God' (Williams, 2000: 84). As the resurrection brought new life, learning in faith then should 'open up wonder and newness of life' (Williams, 2000: 86). It might be suggested that Christian doctrine is not to be applied from an external source to the life of the learning individual; rather, an authentic engagement with doctrine in relation with the self and the Absolute might afford the learner freedom to experience, embrace and question aspects of the 'The Christian Faith.' The movement of loss and return opens up the middle space between doctrine, the learner and the Absolute, and as already identified, it is in this space that the individual might learn.

²¹⁰ See John 19 and 20.

²¹¹ *ex nihilo* refers to the assertion of Genesis 1, that God created the universe out of nothing.

According to Williams, Christ is the mediator in the gap between the temporal self and the Absolute. The relational shape again is triune: this is the relation of self and other with Other that is the relation of relations. Reminiscent of Chapter Four, in which it is proposed that the educator in the middle space is Spirit, Williams suggests that Christ's words, in the middle, also educate. He writes: 'Christ stands in the centre, between me and myself, between the old existence and the new' (Williams, 2000: 91). He explains how a parable for example, facilitates self-awareness and discovery. To avoid providing any given meaning, Christ employs parables as a means for the individual to think again about him or herself in relation to God and the contingent world (including the Christian religious tradition), for his or her own education. (Williams, 2000: 91).

The parable, as an example of the moment that provides the opportunity for the Absolute to intervene, within the relation of relations, is explored more fully in Chapter Seven. However, at this stage, it is necessary to point out that engagement with Biblical texts such as parables might serve as a template for the proposed new perspective of Christian education. In the light of the discussion so far, one might associate the lack of given meaning in the parables with the loss of what is believed and known. Since in the Gospels Christ rarely applies definition to parables,²¹² uncertainty regarding the meaning of Christian doctrine for example is highlighted, leading to the aporia that comes with unknowing. This does not mean that meanings regarding Bible stories or Christian doctrines must be avoided; however, in the middle space, Spirit allows for the individual to wrestle with the aporia of Christ's words, illuminating the story of God in a new way and inspiring learning that is more creative, personal and dynamic.

The parable also highlights the risk involved in suspending given meanings and truths. Certainly for educators in Paradigm One, theological safety comes with the presentation of what is commonly agreed and believed. But the significance of the risk involved in suspending this agreement, such as in the parable, is that in surrendering safety, the story inspires the search for a glimpse of the 'eternal consciousness' (Kierkegaard, 1985:55). Through the loss of pre-determined definitions, one might indeed encounter the Absolute who is beyond definition. Therefore, the movement to the Absolute is not a 'God with' movement of implicit faith, nor does it involve the claiming of certain doctrines in order to own faith; the movement in an authentic perspective of Christian education, illustrated by the parable, is one where

²¹² The only example of Christ explicitly explaining the meaning of parables is found in relation to the 'Parable of the Sower,' found in Matthew 13 vs 1-23.

Christ intervenes and Spirit works to re-imagine, reform and renew. As a result, through the subsequent return, a more dynamic understanding of Christ's words in the Gospels is gained.

As a continuous process of learning, uncertainty continues throughout the life of faith. As the Absolute can no longer be possessed only encountered, faith becomes a continuous dialectical movement that allows the Absolute to enter the contingent experience of the individual and so bring about change.²¹³ Williams's ideas lead Christian education away from the certainty of the finite towards the uncertainty of the infinite in the light of loss. For Kierkegaard, coming to faith includes both certainty *and* uncertainty; therefore, the notion of faith in the light of his writing is considered now.

Kierkegaard's ideas regarding the Christian life are most explicitly outlined in his *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, each of which explores the issues of becoming and being a Christian (Kierkegaard, 1990: xii). In his reticence to term these discourses sermons, Kierkegaard distances himself from any meaning that might be made by the reader (Kierkegaard, 1990: xx). Although they are not pseudonymous, the discourses are written so the 'single individual' (the reader, or in the context of this thesis, the learner) can access the writing within his or her own contingency and with little intervention from the author. He even acknowledges that his writing is his own education so that in any learning that takes place, this comes first (Kierkegaard, 1990: xv).

Alongside this introductory claim, the idea of faith as a loss is laid out. Discourse One, 'The Expectancy of Faith,' concerns the loss of the 'known' and highlights how it is through the absence of immediacy that one might come into an absolute relation with the Absolute. The single individual is warned against relying on transient aspects of life and is encouraged to seek the 'highest good thing' that is faith (Kierkegaard, 1990: 9). The individual is also exhorted to relinquish the present and the illusory assurances that are 'captive to the service of the moment' (Kierkegaard, 1990: 17). Resonant with points made earlier in this chapter, Kierkegaard encourages his learning individual to surrender what is known in order to experience the unknown.

According to Kierkegaard, faith cannot be imparted. Imparted faith is merely an appearance and the 'teacher' who gives such faith, gives it imperfectly. To be 'perfect' (or authentic), it must be willed by the individual (Kierkegaard, 1990: 12-3). This involves a movement away

²¹³ As will be explained in Chapter Six through the illustration of a mobius strip, this is not a systematic circular movement but an ongoing process of learning and relearning.

from the certainty of what the 'other,' be it a teacher or friend offers, in order to find 'what he or she is looking for' (Kierkegaard, 1990: 14). Kierkegaard suggests that the more one holds on to 'given' truth, the further away from truth one becomes. Thus, it is recognised that faith is not concerned with externals but with the individual's inner being. This of course does not concern 'Being' in the Heideggerian sense, nor does it relate to the self-sufficient faith described above.²¹⁴ It is a faith that accepts relation. As Kierkegaard writes: 'Faith is the eternal power *in* a human Being' (Kierkegaard, 1990: 11-12).

As such, authentic faith does not involve a total rejection of what is 'given.' This is important to note. As explained in the Literature Review, the current thesis does not purport to negate Christianity or undermine its doctrines in the process of a learner coming to faith.²¹⁵

Nevertheless, the proposed new perspective of Christian education allows the learner to suspend immediate claims to truth *in order to* explore the new meanings that might emerge following an encounter with the Absolute. This adds a new dimension to learning. In the light of the new perspective, 'The Christian Faith' and its contents are opened up (or interrupted) for the possibility of new meanings. These meanings, in the light of the contingent life of the learning individual, might be recognised in the illusion of illusions. This idea is significant and will be explored in more detail in the following chapters.

Similarly, for Kierkegaard, the move away from immediacy allows the individual to recognise the Absolute without having to make a claim to it. As the movement involves inquiring, wishing, thinking deeply and being anxious, the individual is able to wrestle with rather than eschew what has been 'given' and for Kierkegaard, this inspires a more authentic kind of meaning making (Kierkegaard, 1990: 15). It might be suggested that the action of wrestling with truth also encourages a stronger faith. When God breaks into the contingent present, immediacy is transfigured and the perspective of the individual is changed (Kierkegaard, 1990: 21; 26). Kierkegaard writes: 'God penetrates everything with his eternal clarity' (Kierkegaard, 1990: 39). This not a jolting that brings about the owned faith that is the telos of faith development (Bridger, 2000: 111)²¹⁶ but one that opens up possibility. Again, as outlined above, the intervention of the Absolute ruptures certainty, allowing the individual to engage with Christian truths more openly, and have a fuller and more authentic understanding of

²¹⁴ Faith that for example, relies on conforming to the system of belief provided by the 'Four Points' (see page 16).

²¹⁵ See pages 19-20.

²¹⁶ Bridger explains that when one comes to 'owned faith,' one is 'jolted' into making the move away from the self in order to surrender to the absolute (Bridger, 2000: 111).

them. This idea will be explored further in the light of the story of Job later in the current chapter.

Therefore, the contents of faith can only be held lightly (Kierkegaard, 1990: 267). As already argued, when the individual's faith becomes 'actuality,' it is a mirage, or an illusion (Kierkegaard, 1990: 36).²¹⁷ Discourse Two explains how what is gained as a result of the loss must remain in the negative to be truthful. If it becomes self-certain or presented as *fait accompli* it becomes its own immediacy and the problem persists. Therefore, Discourse Two encourages readers to assume a relationship with God the constant eternal (Kierkegaard, 1990: 33), to acknowledge 'his' grace and to desire that their natures become like 'his' ²¹⁸ (Kierkegaard, 1990: 40). This is enough.

What Kierkegaard calls for is a dialectical relationship in which the individual is able to understand himself in the light of the eternal (Kierkegaard, 1990: 259). He writes:

if a person sustains that expectancy (of faith) in his soul, he has a goal that is always valid, a criterion that is always valid and valid in itself; by means of this goal and this criterion he will always understand himself in temporality (Kierkegaard, 1990: 260).

This is featured in the thirteenth discourse, 'The Expectancy of eternal salvation,' in which the author describes how eternity disturbs temporality and takes the individual beyond the immediate to a concern²¹⁹ for the eternal. This disturbance awakens a concern for 'God'. This does not equate to any conditions. It concerns only the Absolute. The disturbance, or intervention of the Absolute, will be explored further in due course.

For Kierkegaard concern is not certainty, or what he calls 'temporal assurance' (Kierkegaard, 1990: 266), but in fact uncertainty. He writes: 'he who is truly concerned can never fathom eternal salvation finitely as it can never be fathomed' (Kierkegaard, 1990: 266). In the

²¹⁷ 'Actuality' will be highlighted again later in this Chapter, regarding Kierkegaard's *Stages on Life's Way*.

²¹⁸ Again, the designation of gender pertains to the rhetoric of the author but it might be argued that any designation, where masculine, feminine or neutral is antithetical to his view regarding the unknowable absolute.

²¹⁹ The notion of 'concern' features in the text *Dynamics of Faith* by Paul Tillich. In this text, Tillich alludes to faith as 'Ultimate concern,' that is, a concern with the dimension of life that is beyond the immediate. For faith, Tillich exhorts the learner to lose self-certainty (Tillich, 2001: 4;7) and to participate in a transcendent experience of the 'Ultimate.' Concern for the Ultimate is described as surrender. This surrender involves uncertainty. In the act of surrender, the 'cleavage between subject and object' is overcome and the idolatrousness of dualistic faith is eluded (Tillich, 2001: 13). Uncertainty might also be equated with doubt. However, in his consideration of doubt, Tillich does not advocate the rejection of the contents of faith, but their re-evaluation. He describes the importance of promoting a dialectical relation of faith and doubt, noting that doubt, which is 'aware of the element of insecurity in every existential truth' (Tillich, 2001: 23) is a necessary element in faith (Tillich, 2001: 19).

thirteenth discourse, as in all his writings, he diverts the reader away from making pretensions to having absolute knowledge and advocates the move from the immediate states of human existence to the religious (Kierkegaard, 1988: 415). He petitions the individual who seeks to secure a faith on the strength of the eternal not to diminish the eternal in any way, and in laying aside any claims to self-sufficiency, appeals to him or her to become expectant of salvation (Kierkegaard, 1990: 272-3).

For a new perspective of Christian education one might consider again how Kierkegaard's ideas have significance. First, to make the leap of faith means to relinquish what the *Postscript* describes as the 'reliable teachers' (Kierkegaard, 1992: 12) and their activities. This includes suspending mastery in all its forms. It also identifies the teacher not as the adult authority figure, but as Spirit. Next it involves letting go of the presuppositions and pre-determined truths that the 'reliable teachers' present. It means recognising that truth is contingent and provisional, and therefore illusory, inspiring teachers and learners to recognise the illusion of the illusion. It also means leaping into epistemological uncertainty where unknowing takes precedent. In such a perspective, the teacher does not know in advance what is to be learnt. Neither does faith development equate to the grasping of the contents of 'The Christian Faith.' Here, the loss of the certain and the subsequent return instead allows for the eternal to interrupt the presuppositions of the finite and temporal. In an ongoing process, the learning individual is able to continually reimagine the contents of faith and thus develop freely and become transformed.

Faith is no longer a possession to be claimed and grasped, imposed or given. In the light of this chapter, it is suggested that the movement of faith neither is directed towards grasping what is learnt. The movement is rather a forwards and backwards interchange in which the learning individual and the contents of faith relate dialectically with one another in relation with the Absolute. In the middle space of the relation, inspired by the work of Spirit, is faith. A new perspective of Christian education then considers learning for faith in terms of a process that takes place in the broken middle. The following chapter explores the issue of education and the movement of learning in particular. However, to consider the notion of faith more fully, it is necessary to note the nature of truth in authentic learning. This this is considered now, again in the light of Kierkegaardian theory.

5.4 Faith and truth

It is clear through Kierkegaard's writing that what is presented is not to be accepted as 'the truth.' As highlighted above, even the *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses* which reflect the Christian tradition more explicitly, promote the process of learning more than the meaning that is made. Gardiner emphasises the importance for truth of Kierkegaard's indirect communication in his pseudonymous texts, and outlines the significance of the mask. Through the disguises of the various 'authors' in these texts, the reader is left to draw his or her own conclusions (Kierkegaard, 1988: 44) regarding what is written. By losing Kierkegaard as the author, the individual comes to the truth of 'nothing' as 'something,' so to learn about his-self as well as his-self in relation to other.

Stages on Life's Way is one of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous texts. The writing is indirect and is presented by a number of pseudonymous characters to the 'single individual' in various scenarios. In this text, Kierkegaard considers further the movement away from the aesthetic and ethical states as previously presented in *Either/Or* (1974); for faith, he now adds the move to the religious. This is illustrated partly through the story of a young man who struggles with love. In coming to learn truth, it is suggested that 'each person,' that is both the young man and the reader 'must find his own path to inner understanding that does justice to his own individuality and may carry him beyond the boundaries of the ethical' (Kierkegaard, 1988: 56).

The section 'Guilty/Not Guilty' is written in the form of a diary and recounts the activities of this young man in relation to the girl who is the object of his affection. The illusion of immediate truth is reflected in the characters' relationship. At the outset, this young man's desire for the girl is concealed like a mask. It is his immediacy and is true only to himself (Kierkegaard, 1988: 201). Thus, it is illusory. The author suggests that what is true is masked by ideality. However, recognition of the 'illusion' is the beginning of his journey. This is his education; this leads him into self-understanding and so to truth.

As the character seeks to move beyond the mask and into a relationship in actuality, the illusion is underlined. Actuality illuminates something totally different and this is alarming. On declaring 'she is mine' (Kierkegaard, 1988: 211), his knowledge of her changes and so does the relationship. He now knows her in reality. She is now his possession. But he questions: what is reality, if not another illusion? He therefore experiences tension; the comfort of ideality in his not-knowing is coupled with the terror of knowing her in actuality (Kierkegaard, 1988: 215). The diary writings indicate how he attempts to manage this paradigm shift and as the relation evolves, the reader becomes aware of his pain in the struggle as he experiences the change (Kierkegaard, 1988: 231-2).

The girl on the other hand exists in aesthetic immediacy. Her truthfulness in relation to the man is immediate since he appears to her in his externality. Knowledge is given to her and through this she makes him 'ideal.' Her love is in-itself and there is no obstacle or pain (Kierkegaard, 1988: 413). Whilst developing a relation with the other, her truth is still immediate, since love is assumed and she is in no doubt (Kierkegaard, 1988: 414). The man however, in his distress, bemoans this fate. He declares that the ideal view of a lover is an illusion and describes the relationship as a 'relation of power-seduction' (Kierkegaard, 1988: 311). As such the relation is a misrelation.

For education, the misrelation is significant. In this context, it inspires the young man to move beyond his immediacy. He needs to experience a 'higher passion' (Kierkegaard, 1988: 406) and so in transcending immediacy, he moves towards the religious which is his relation with the infinite. The contradiction of the immediate in the relation to the infinite (Kierkegaard, 1988: 409) becomes his learning. This is a dialectical experience in which he 'holds on firmly to his love and maintains that he will not, cannot make it concrete' (Kierkegaard, 1988: 415). As outlined above, when the misrelation illustrates the unequal relation of broken halves, it is educative. The misrelation which disallows totality, rather allows for the identification of the middle space, in which learning as Spirit might take place.

The events of the diary entries provide a parallel to that of the single individual whose learning involves the movement to the religious state. This is considered in the section 'Letter to the reader,' a commentary presented in *Stages on Life's Way* by pseudonymous author Frater Taciturnus. In this commentary, the author highlights the imperative of the dialectic for an authentic life of faith and explores what the term 'religious' might mean. He explains how for some it concerns the means by which the individual accesses the immediacies of faith: history or poetry for example. The individual here remaining in the aesthetic state, is enthusiastic 'about' the religious but is not yet religious himself. The ethical individual enters into an immediate relation with the religious and being 'untested in infinite reflection, he embraces the 'doctrine of obligation' (Kierkegaard, 1988: 486-7).

Taciturnus argues rather for the 'religiousness of infinity' (Kierkegaard, 1988: 304). As well as accepting the truth in relation as misrelation, and acknowledging the value of loss (Gardiner, 1988: 60), Taciturnus illuminates how the tension between ideality and reality and the risk of loss of one to the other, result in the 'higher passion' of the religious (Kierkegaard, 1988: 435). Here, just as the young man becomes the negation of immediacy and ideality, the movement to the religious is made on the basis of his negative relation to the infinite. He does not 'know'

the infinite, therefore cannot grasp knowledge as truth. Recognising that the 'infinitely negative is the only adequate form for the negative' (Kierkegaard, 1988: 486), the learning individual recognises the illusion of the finite in-itself.

The infinite reflection which inspires a sense of the 'religiousness of infinity,' involves a double movement. This is the negation of the negation. Although not without obstacles, danger or risk, this negation signifies a 'God-relationship of the widest scope' (Kierkegaard, 1988: 414). It opens up the way for the impossibility of the infinite to influence the finite. The author writes: 'infinite reflection is not something alien but immediacy's transparency to itself' (Kierkegaard, 1988: 414). Unable to grasp the contents of religion and thus seemingly further away from being religious, the author suggests he is paradoxically closer. He understands the religious to be beyond temporality and does not 'make the mistake by grasping something particular' (Kierkegaard, 1988: 487).

As in *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses* cited above, the author's suspicion regarding immediacy is evident at various points in the diary writing. For example, he writes that in immediacy there is no distinction between the idea of the absolute and that which is represented through language and thought (Kierkegaard, 1988: 216). The consequences of this are that God might be created in man's image (Kierkegaard, 1988: 229), thus making the absolute exclusive (Kierkegaard, 1988: 260). He incites individuals who prioritise religious categories such as 'holy names' and 'Biblical terms' (Kierkegaard, 1988: 304)²²⁰ and as these also might equate to possession, they must be renounced. As Taciturnus argues, when the individual seeks the 'religiousness of infinity,' truth is not presented or proclaimed as highlighted above,²²¹ (Kierkegaard, 1988: 304) but rather incites a transformational relational encounter (Kierkegaard, 1988: 434-6). This is the reality of faith.

As the story of the young man highlights, it is within the dialectical relation of ideality and reality that the learner is able to experience the negation of negation and so come to a transformed understanding of truth. 'Reality' is often used as a driver word in Children's Spirituality literature and seeking to provide an alternative to a doctrinal engagement with spirituality, authors perceive spiritual reality to be separate to the contingent world. However, this idea must be revisited and comment on this in the light of Kierkegaard's view of truth is now provided.

²²⁰ This might also pertain to the creeds and Christian practices presented earlier.

²²¹ See page 20.

5.5 Reality and ideality

Spirituality is often described as an 'ontological reality' (Hyde, 2008: 29). By this, scholars promote the idea that spirituality, as an innate and universal dimension of humanity, cannot be denied (e.g. Hardy, 1979; Zohar and Marshall, 2000; Newberg and D' Aquili, 2001).

Moriarty proposes that spiritual experiences often involve an 'unseen reality' and drawing on William James's accounts of a variety of religious experiences, she suggests that his theory defends the 'reality of subjective spiritual experience' (Moriarty, 2014: 12-3). As such it is proposed that what takes place within the inner life of the individual, whilst not expressly articulated or demonstrated, is real and therefore personally meaningful. Describing the movement to Ultimate Unity with the other depicted as an 'Ultimate Reality,' Hyde explains that the individual experiences reality at the widest or deepest level of connectedness. He suggests that as the 'I-me-mine' egocentric triad breaks down,

the world as it really is, without self-referent attachments is apperceived and one can glimpse the reality of things as they really are (Hyde, 2008: 34).

Reality is no longer masked. Reality is then not what is experienced in the contingent world, but that which is transcendent of it. Hart presents spirituality in terms of 'direct knowing.' This is 'mystical knowing that is beyond the intellects' ability to pin down as infinite comprehension' (Hart, 2003: 50). In order for one to access this 'direct knowing,' a veil should be lifted. This is the veil of illusion. Once the veil is lifted, questions inevitably emerge to existentially consider the dimensions of ethics, intentions and truth (Hart, 2003: 278-9).

Each author here deems 'reality' as a dimension to be grasped personally and immediately. The contingent world seems to be a dimension that veils reality and as such should be overcome. However, in the light of the current discussion, the veil and mask are vital for education and will be considered again shortly. In Kierkegaard, it is the relation of reality with ideality that allows for the individual to experience truth, within the contingent world and not apart from it. Therefore, in considering a new perspective of Christian education, it is important to consider further how the dialectic of reality and ideality promotes authentic learning.

As stated above, Kierkegaard addresses reality in the 'Letter to the reader' section of *Stages on Life's Way*. The relation of reality and ideality is presented in terms of the aesthetic hero who in the immediate has not yet attained the religious state. At the beginning of the story, the young man's love is true only for himself. It is not yet expressed to the woman and is concealed by his 'inclosing reserve' (Kierkegaard, 1998: 427). It is thus only evident as ideality.

When the young man's love becomes a reality, it is only expressed in immediacy (in limited terms) and therefore is an illusion of reality. The female character's love is also lost to ideality. As she loves the man in immediacy, within the aesthetic state, she loves according to how she believes she must love. Her love is 'canonized' and accepted as true. However, the woman does not yet know the man in reality, so her truth is also illusory.

The illustration of both characters here again highlights the limitations of immediacy in learning. The ideality of the young man might pertain to the contents of faith as immediately expressed in the ideas of Bridger and Yust, or the learning that takes place in the enclosed space of the womb. Here, immediate truth serves to validate itself and rather than promote the higher passion that is faith, it remains as it is, static and unchanged. Truth here is truth only in terms of the context that has created it. The 'canonized truth' of the young woman similarly highlights limitations. Here truth equates to that which the learner understands he or she should believe. It suggests that proclaimed truth, which is accepted and agreed, is true truth. Yet as Rose points out, any truth that is accepted as truth amongst many is illusory (Rose, 1992: 10).

Again, it must be noted that the doctrines of the Christian faith are not considered here to be untrue. Nevertheless, it is the conjecture of the current thesis that when educating learners within a Christian context for an authentic life of faith, it is erroneous to suggest that immediate apprehensions and expressions of Christianity such as doctrine, tradition and a notion of 'God' are in themselves the means by which learners learn. Furthermore, since learning for faith transcends knowledge, the reality of faith is inspired not by accepting and believing what is presented in immediacy, but through an encounter with the Absolute. Therefore, whilst not negating the truth claims of Christianity, the proposed new perspective of Christian education considers that learners, through the work of Spirit in the middle space, explore the truth of the 'unseen reality' away from the immediacy of the self, so to inspire the higher passion that is faith. This requires a leap of faith, or in the rhetoric of *Stages on Life's Way*, the move to the religious.

The mask that conceals reality becomes the means by which immediacy is overcome. When used as a starting point for thinking and reflecting, the mask becomes the key to learning (Rose 1992: 10). It provides the middle space between ideality and reality in which more authentic learning can take place. Rose argues that every beginning appears as a mask. However, as a negative self-relation, the 'dramatized illusion' of the mask prevents the individual from lapsing into thought and having 'the advantage in coming to understand'

(Rose, 1992: 10). As truth is in the negative, rather than claiming the beginning as absolute, the mask opens up the *possibility* of the beginning and this is the foundation of faith.

This is illustrated by Tubbs in terms of the story of a minister who wears a veil, signifying his imminent death (Tubbs, 2008: 16). When his congregation look upon the veil and not his real face, this alerts them to reality of death. The veil interrupts the separation of life and death and brings death into the realm of life. The symbol of the veil also exemplifies the middle space between life and death and ensures that ideality (life without death) is recognised as illusory. When the veil is lifted, reality is also revealed as an illusion. This marks the illusion of the illusion. Recognition of the illusion of the illusion inspires the congregation (or in the current thesis, the learning individual) to come to 'know thyself' (Tubbs, 2008: 16-18). The illusion of the illusion prevents the learner from possessing actuality as truth and learning begins from the moment of this recognition. As the congregation are forced to consider their own death, this is their education.²²²

Again, for a new perspective of Christian education, when the illusion of immediacy is revealed, and through negation immediacy is interrupted, recognition of the illusion of the illusion highlights how perceptions of truth must be continually reworked and reassessed. Exemplifying the middle, the veil highlights the space in which the relational element of truth is made manifest. Truth for faith therefore is not based on externals but what is in between, in the dialectical relation of the learner and immediate truth. The space is opened up as immediacy is interrupted, and this is signified as the intervention of the Absolute that inspires the relation of relations. This idea of interruption is significant in the current discussion and considered now.

5.6 The breakthrough

Considering love as an allegory of faith, Kierkegaard notes in *Philosophical Fragments*, how faith is gained at the nexus of the understanding with the paradox (Kierkegaard, 2009: 129). This happens in a moment when the self is surrendered and the paradox is accepted (Kierkegaard, 2009: 125). The self (single individual/immediacy) is lost to the other

²²² The idea of the veil is also addressed in Kierkegaard's text *Works of Love*. Here he opens with the statement that love's hidden life is recognisable by its fruits. What is hidden or masked is the truth of love which resides within the individual (Kierkegaard, 2009: 23). The mask is not deceit or separation but when considered in terms of relation, the middle space between self and other has significance. The author considers love to be temporality *and* eternity related dialectically: the mask's hidden-ness prevents love from slipping into the self-deception of the temporal world and thus becoming a possession whilst eternality ensures that it is 'before everything else and remains when all else is past' (Kierkegaard, 2009: 24).

(eternal/absolute) but through the loss, the eternal intervenes. This is the interruption or 'moment' of learning. It might also be described as a breakthrough. As noted variously in previous chapters, the idea of the interruption or breakthrough is highlighted as having educational significance and therefore in the proposal of a new perspective in Christian education, it is necessary to consider further what this might mean for learning. The breakthrough is illustrated by Kierkegaard in terms of the Biblical story of Job.

In a number of Kierkegaard's writings, the story of Job is used to provide an analogy for the movement of surrender, loss and return in coming to faith (Kierkegaard, 1988: 243). It also illustrates the torment involved in this process. Job, a wealthy businessman and man of faith, finds his faith tested when, at the direction of God in response to Satan, his belongings, livelihood and family are all destroyed. Job's anguish is recounted in a lengthy Biblical narrative. Accusing and criticising, his 'friends' offer unhelpful counsel. An embittered lengthy dialogue between Job and these opponents is presented as the story's protagonists try to make sense of Job's circumstances. What is significant here is that Job's extreme loss is his education. At the point of recognition of his loss, Job surrenders himself to God. Rather than respond in anger, he proclaims: 'The Lord gave, the Lord took away – blessed be the name of the Lord.'²²³

At first, the surrender does not improve Job's situation. This leads his opponents to question how and why he has experienced such loss. However, at the conclusion of a lengthy narrative that outlines Job's torment, God intervenes. God's voice is heard as a thunderbolt from within a storm. This thunderbolt signifies the 'moment' that leads Job to recognise God's sovereignty in all things. This is Job's moment of submission. He declares: 'I will change my heart and life and sit in the dust and ashes.'²²⁴ Finally, we read that he was given back twice as much as he had lost, being blessed by God and having much success.²²⁵ As the loss allowed for the breakthrough of the Absolute, Job was transformed and blessed.

Job is first introduced as a resource for reflection in Kierkegaard's *Repetition*. Published in 1843, *Repetition* concerns the plight of a young man in love. The narrative describes the author's exchanges with this young man as he wrestles with the agony of loving and not having. Albeit similar to 'Guilty/Not Guilty' in *Stages on Life's Way*, this text particularly concerns the method by which the young man comes to let go of the lover who torments his

²²³ Job 1 vs 21; New International Version.

²²⁴ Job 42 vs 6; New International Version.

²²⁵ Job 42 vs 12; New International Version.

soul, and therefore it concerns the educative aspect of love. As the text outlines the subsequent movement towards this young man's own self-understanding, it reflects the movement of loss and return in coming to faith. This character recognises the power of Job as a teacher; hence he reflects on this Biblical character's story as a means of coming to terms with his own situation (Kierkegaard, 2009: 63).

For his personal life, the young man notes how Job's plight illuminates his own torment. He initially highlights how Job's faith was not immediate. Although losing all his possessions, representing the tangible expressions of immediacy, he suggests that Job was able to accept that the Lord took his livelihood away. He was able to accept this not because it came easily to him in 'immediate self-possession,' but because of the faith that came as a result of suffering (Kierkegaard, 1990: 58). When Job was able to say 'blessed be the name of the Lord,' he did so not as a voyeur, or one who looks on faith, but because he had experienced God's magnificence. As the writer later outlines, Job's struggle was neither aesthetic nor ethical but transcendent, surpassing knowledge and thought. His religiousness then suggests that his faith was not possessed in immediacy, but it suspended all actuality in relation to the eternal (Kierkegaard, 1990: 68). The loss of the immediate made way for the intervention of God.

The pseudonymous author of *Repetition* suggests that in order to empathise with Job, and to reflect on his own torment, he might enter into the situation of Job and make Job's words his own. However, he also recognises that this would lead to misunderstanding since he has not yet experienced the extent of Job's pain. This lies in wait. To do so would be to 'put on' the words in the same way as the child who wears his father's clothes. He cannot understand Job's torment from the inside and therefore cannot recognise his pain. He has not experienced the pain of faith nor the grace of the eternal (Kierkegaard, 1990: 65).

Reflecting this in educational terms, it might be suggested that any explanation regarding the eternal is abstract, holding no meaning, unless the individual is able to enter into the same difficult relation. This highlights again the significance of the risk and anguish involved in a perspective of education that aims to work within a broken middle space. The spiritual educator must be prepared to surrender models and methods that 'put on' words and beliefs, so that the learner might experience the intervention of the Absolute from within the broken middle.

Being transcendent, Job's relation with the eternal is one of opposition; it therefore cannot be placed in the realm of thought or understanding. It exists beyond the ethical realm

(Kierkegaard, 1990: 67). Job's faith lies beyond the immediate. Kierkegaard writes: 'the disputes at the boundaries of faith are fought out in him' (Kierkegaard, 1990: 67). This sits in contrast to the 'half-hour's reading' undertaken on the part of philosophers or theologians, and their 'hastily drawn conclusion(s)' (Kierkegaard, 1990: 67), clearly illustrating immediacy and the evasion of any terror. Resonance with the perspectives of Paradigm One are again clear, yet it might also be suggested that this transcendent dimension of faith sits in contrast to the enclosed space of children's spirituality, in which the inner life of the individual is validated and not surrendered.

For Kierkegaard's young man, the movement of giving and taking away, followed by the doubling of the gift through grace, is considered an example of the movement of repetition (Kierkegaard, 1990: 69). Whilst this movement will be considered in greater detail in Chapter Six, it is necessary to provide a simple definition now. In Kierkegaard's text of the same name, the movement of repetition is explored in relation to Socratic recollection. Although the author accepts that the movement back to what has already been is necessary, equally there must be a movement forward. Repetition for Job meant that in aftermath of the loss of the immediate, he was able to recollect that God is good. This is his statement of faith. Yet after the breakthrough inspired by the storm, he was able to move forward into a future of blessing; this forward movement repeats his statement of faith as an actuality. Job 'knows' that God is good; yet it is in his experience of the goodness of God, that he is able to understand this more fully (Kierkegaard, 1990: 69). It also inspires him to live in this light.

In the Literature Review, as well as the early part of the current chapter, it is highlighted that according to faith development theorists such as J.W. Westerhoff, an external demonstration of 'owned faith' is a change in the way the individual lives (Westerhoff, 1976: 98). When one owns faith, the decisions and behaviours of the individual are carried out in the light of the faith. Yet, as also highlighted in this chapter, this linear movement towards the grasping of faith contents does not include the breakthrough that interrupts such grasping, and there is no middle space. It is argued here that in order for the learning individual to live authentically in the light of faith, he or she must first, as did Job, surrender to the Absolute and allow for the experience of the breakthrough in his or her own life.

The author of *Repetition* concedes that 'a thunderstorm can really do one good' (Kierkegaard, 1990: 69). To only recollect is to only rethink and reorder the situation. To accept repetition is to accept change. When all seems desperate, God intervenes. The young man of Kierkegaard's *Repetition* subsequently considers how a breakthrough similar to that of Job's might assist

him in his own situation (Kierkegaard, 1990: 70). It would certainly subvert his immediacy, forcing him to deny any aspect of the voyeur in his situation, and disturb him so to effect a transformation (Kierkegaard, 2009: 70-1). He would be disrupted but ultimately strengthened.

For a proposed new perspective of Christian education then, this idea presents a helpful summary: through the negation of immediacy, which recognises the illusion of the illusion, perceptions of learning and truth are disturbed and reworked, so that transformation takes place. The loss of the universal experienced by the individual is a rupture, resulting in anguish and pain. But a result of the loss is the breakthrough which brings about change. This idea is considered further by Rowan Williams in his short chapter 'Ray of Darkness' and key points from this text are presented now in conclusion to the current chapter.

5.7 Ray of Darkness

Williams notes that the 'ray of darkness,' a phrase used by the 5th Century Syrian Dionysius and later the 17th Century poet Henry Vaughan, is made in reference to God who, as the ray or beam of light, cuts in to the lives of individuals to cause an interruption (Williams, 2003: 119). In the short chapter that explores this concept, Williams first acknowledges the ray of darkness as a paradox. The paradoxical nature of this concept highlights his view concerning the 'elusiveness of truth' (Williams, 2003: 119). As it is paradoxical to equate a 'ray' with darkness, this paradox serves to illustrate how the truth of faith is not always what is obvious and known. He asserts that a paradox 'keeps a question alive,' and avoiding conclusions, it stops learners from taking an easy option in coming to faith (Williams, 2003: 119). The paradox opens up a space for enquiry and reflection, and reinforces the brokenness of the self and other relation.

As signified earlier in terms of *Fear and Trembling* and *Repetition*, the interruption is an educational imperative. Here the ray interrupts the illusion of self-sufficiency. As it does so, it disturbs and transforms. Williams suggests that when the ray of darkness cuts through, it 'may make me a stranger to myself' (Williams, 2003: 119). Yet, as highlighted through Job and the plight of the young man, the interruption of self-sufficiency is indeed the education of the self. In the light of the interruption, one must find a new way of knowing oneself. For the current thesis, the learner comes to know him or herself subjectively as the illusion that recognises illusion. Aporetically, this moves the learner to a state of unknowing – to embrace what is beyond utterance and comprehension in order to challenge what is acceptable or 'given.' Williams writes: 'when God's light breaks in on my darkness, the first thing I know is that I

don't know – and never did' (Williams, 2003: 120). This unknowing - the negation of certainty - takes one closer to truthfulness; but this only comes about as a result of the unrest caused by the disturbance.

In the second section of his chapter, Williams claims that the breakthrough might not happen in a temporal moment (Williams, 2003: 120). Whilst ecstatic experiences such as those recorded by William James, as well others in Children's Spirituality literature,²²⁶ are significant to the individual at the time, their impact might not be long-lasting. Indeed, one might ask: how do we recognise the fruit of this learning? Williams explains that the breakthrough that interrupts and questions self-certainty is a process that happens over time. As the characters in Kierkegaard's stories do not attain self-understanding in a singular moment, Christian teachers who aim to inspire a lasting faith and spiritual life in learning individuals should also be aware of this. The fruit of spiritual education should not be emotional or transitional: it should be transformational.

Williams posits that Christian educational practices (such as prayer and ritual for example) should be 'designed to keep us in some degree on this edge of experience where I and my world, my regularities and securities are always being made provisional' (Williams, 2003: 120). He argues for a paradigm where the individual might feel safe in finding, losing and re-finding him or herself (Williams, 2003: 121). This does not mean that the practices should be abandoned altogether. However, Williams intimates that when the ray of darkness interrupts their self-enclosing, the practices might take on new meaning for the learner, accessed in a more personal and dynamic way. The loss of the self-certain and enclosing nature of Christian teaching ensures then that learning is not controlled.

In terms of a learner's consideration of God, the interruption forces the individual to consider contingency and accept the myriad understandings and misunderstandings that comprise such a consideration (Williams, 2003: 121). As stated in the Literature Review in terms of research by Rizzuto, there are as many ideas of God as there are people (Rizzuto, 1979: 180).²²⁷ The ray of darkness interrupts representations of God that might have little meaning to learners in their own contingent situation, and allows for the 'misunderstandings' that learners might have as they explore their own representations, to become their own

²²⁶ An example of an ecstatic spiritual experience is described by Tobin Hart: he suggests that 'a few hours in the surf' might become an experience of absorption – where the individual is at one with the moment – and that such an experience can have sacred properties, leading to awe, wonder and mystery (Hart, 2003: 49).

²²⁷ See page 43.

understanding. The interruption also provides an alternative to the 'cultivating' of Christians proposed by Yust, which sees learners adopting the language and rituals of 'The Christian Faith' as a means of developing faith. It also edges away from uncritically engaging with concepts, ideas and symbols. Rather than adopting the concepts of 'The Christian Faith' in order to come to faith, the ray of darkness allows them to be re-imagined by the individual learner.

Finally, death and resurrection of Christ, noted earlier in reference to *On Christian Theology*, also serves in 'Ray of Darkness' as a template for the loss and return. The paradox of the cross, with its contradictions of love and pain, disturbs that which is controlled 'by law and institution' (Williams, 2003: 122). Historically, the breakthrough exercised as Christ rose from the dead, overcame the religious world of First Century Jews. Equally today, it overcomes that which is immediate, authoritative and inescapable. It is 'a promise for those alive to their own vulnerability' (Williams, 2003: 122-3). Furthermore, the loss results in the gaining of strength. The resurrection 'breaks through to some unimaginable new level of being': in the same way, learning individuals can come into the same newness of being. They can be transformed. Christians can live with uncertainty, mystery and unknowing because of the certainty of the breakthrough of Christ (Williams, 2003: 123). As Williams states: this is our repetition - that we live in the light of death and resurrection, terror and joy, and loss and fullness. The ray of darkness is not the antithesis of light; it is an expression of God's 'dart of love' (Williams, 2003: 124).

5.8 Conclusion

The ray of Darkness is the moment of rupture that breaks into self-sufficiency and allows for the individual to understand him or herself more fully in relation to the eternal. For a new perspective of Christian education proposed in the light of the surrender and breakthrough, the notion of the model or method for inspiring a life of faith as presented in this thesis, must now be revisited. In the new perspective, the inspiration for faith involves a leap away from the certainty of what is known and understood; the life of faith is illuminated by the paradoxical breakthrough of the eternal into temporality; the 'fruit' of a life of faith is not necessarily demonstrated externally but manifested in the strength gained from an encounter with the absolute. The journey of faith then must be considered as a continuous movement of loss and return that embraces difficulty and pain. The following chapters consider the significance of the movement of learning for Christian education and exploring the

Kierkegaardian notion of repetition further, the discussion considers how the movement might inspire authentic learning for a meaningful life of faith.

CHAPTER SIX: LEARNING

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter notes how Rowan Williams explains that the 'ray of darkness' provides the moment of rupture that breaks into self-sufficiency, and allows for the individual to understand him or herself more fully in relation to the eternal. The ray interrupts ignorance, cuts through comfortableness and questions personal identity (Williams, 2003: 119-20). This chapter explores further the idea of rupture in the light of the paradoxical relation of self and other, and considers its significance in learning for a life of faith.

6.2 Self-sufficiency

In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* (1992), Kierkegaard likens self-sufficiency to the wider aspects of society, including the church, that represent an established order; here the understanding of objective precepts is deemed to precede subjective knowledge and experience (Vardy, 1996: 57). Self-sufficiency concerns for example the 'what' of God that is communicated in religion. This is illustrated by the activities of what he calls 'Religion A' (Kierkegaard, 1992: 555). Here the religious person, who is baptized, carries a bible and owns a hymn book, presents all the required outward appearances of a Christian (Kierkegaard, 1992: 557), yet does not fully live a life of faith (Vardy, 1996: 31-3).

Kierkegaard continues to describe how speculative thought has taken control of historical Christianity.²²⁸ As the understanding here is so prevalent, there is no sense of 'beyond;' the experience of Christianity is merely finite (Kierkegaard, 1992: 361). As a result, everything is standardised: 'the concepts are gradually being cancelled and the words are coming to mean everything.' He continues: 'the whole thing is toothless maundering' which he argues, represents spiritual bankruptcy (Kierkegaard, 1992: 363). In practice, the activities of the faith become custom and habit; nevertheless, the Christian is led to assume that these are a necessary requirement for a life of faith.

In their reader based on the works of Kierkegaard, Chamberlain and Ree place Kierkegaard's thinking in contrast with Hegel. They suggest for example that self-sufficiency is evident when thought is brought into a mediate relation with Christianity. Understanding the telos of the Hegelian dialectic to be absolute knowledge, speculative thought assumes itself as part of the

²²⁸ This reflects further his discomfort regarding the activities of the Danish church of his day and his deeming of the church as a secular institution in which the true aims of such activities are inverted (Gardiner, 1988: 15-6).

other. In this case, self-consciousness becomes its own truth. Chamberlain and Ree argue that in the paradigm described by Kierkegaard here, the individual similarly assumes Christianity (and not faith) as part of him or herself, evidencing 'the Hegelian egocentric orientation of the subject' (Chamberlain and Ree, 1998: 27). This concerns the contents of Christianity as well as models and methods of learning.

The critique of Hegel by Chamberlain and Ree also concerns the relation of master and slave. Considering immediacy as error (Hegel, 1977: 59), Hegel's *Phenomenology* highlights how self-consciousness recognises the other mediately as an illusion of itself (Hegel, 1977: 114). As the dialectical struggle indicates, although self-consciousness seeks its own freedom, it must accept that it exists only in relation to the illusory other. It needs the other for its own truth. Life is only life in relation to death (Hegel, 1977: 111-138), and the struggle that perpetuates in the Unhappy Consciousness (Hegel, 1977: 131) is a reminder of this. In its ultimacy, Hegel's dialectic is 'self in other' and this equates to absolute knowledge.²²⁹

Chamberlain and Ree describe this relation as $A=A$ (Chamberlain and Ree, 1998: 28): each partner is absolute in absolute relation. This equation was introduced earlier in the current thesis in terms of Levinas's criticism of mutual recognition; Levinas posits this relation of 'self and self' as complete and self-certain. The equation is also reflective of educational shapes described earlier such as Erricker's liberationist pedagogy or Wright's confessional pedagogy in which the self is absolute in relation to an absolute other. It further illustrates the dichotomy outlined in the Literature review, and highlights how the learning individual claims either an external presentation of Christian truth, or validates personal truth. In each case, the learning individual is self-sufficient.

Kierkegaard suggests that this relation is a relation of misrecognition (Kierkegaard, 1992: 264). In the $A=A$ relation, neither speculation nor Christianity are opposites but reflections of the same (Kierkegaard, 1992: 363-4). Yet in a relation with a third partner, that is the relation of relations, misrecognition is education. These opposites no longer relate absolutely; they relate unequally. As unequal, a disturbance, or interruption in the relation is evident and this, opening up the broken middle, is the moment of learning.

²²⁹ It is also important to note that whilst in this thesis the middle space proposed by Hegel is significant, as is the educational value of illusion, Kierkegaard's educational philosophy represents a divergence from the systemic negotiation of self and other. For Hegel, the conditions of knowing the absolute are described epistemologically through struggle and illusion but for Kierkegaard the absolute of Christianity goes beyond thought and is given to the individual in experience.

As Tubbs highlights, Kierkegaard's philosophy of the teacher is founded upon the idea of this unequal relation. His use of indirect communication in storytelling, the use of pseudonyms, the paradox of the human and divine relation, and the asymmetry in the relation of teacher to student (Tubbs, 2005: 216), all point toward the notion that truth cannot be given or understood either immediately or mediately; truth is negotiated in the middle of self and other and Other. The Absolute of Christianity becomes the third partner in the broken relation (Tubbs, 2005: 218): as Spirit, the absolute is the one who intervenes and illuminates the truth.

According to Rose (Rose, 1996: 71-2) and Tubbs (Tubbs, 2004: 44-5; 2005: 217), misrecognition is a significant educational tool. It is the recognition of misrecognition that takes learners beyond the simple relation of $A=A$, to confront self-sufficiency and open up the middle space. This inspires the leap of faith. As the teacher, Spirit works within the asymmetry of the relation, and in the continuous process that is the life of faith, what is understood as truth is transformed. What is required for authentic education then is the broken relation of misrecognition. It is proposed here that learners recognise the illusion of the $A=A$ relation, and through the double negation of the illusion of illusion, embrace the truth of untruth.

In the *Postscript*, Kierkegaard presents Christianity not as speculation but in terms of 'existence.' Here becoming a Christian 'should occur quietly within the individual without any decisive external action' (Kierkegaard, 1992: 365). This takes the Christian away from a cognitive understanding of the faith to an experience that will 'exist in it' (Kierkegaard, 1992: 378). Having considered the idea of existence in terms of Rahner's theology of childhood²³⁰ and more fully in Chapter One in terms of Heidegger's philosophy, attention is now given to this notion in terms of the life of faith.

6.3 Existence

In the context of Christian education, 'existence' concerns the relation of the subjective individual with Christianity. It is noticeably at a tangent to the concept proposed for example by Heidegger.²³¹ As explored in Chapter One, Heidegger's 'existenz' is the designation of Being given to *Dasein*, which is the manner of Being of an individual, rather than a determinate signification of logic (Heidegger, 1962: 67). In response to the forces of science or theology,

²³⁰ See page 26.

²³¹ As Pattison in *The Philosophy of Kierkegaard* points out, the relationship between Heidegger, Kierkegaard and existentialism is complex and it whilst it must be acknowledged that the ideas of this philosopher 'received from Kierkegaard its decisive impulse' (Pattison: 2005: 13), a difference in understanding regarding 'existence' is evident.

and seeking to regain possibility as an imperative in philosophy, *Dasein's* existenz is grounded in its essence (Heidegger, 1962: 152). It must be interpreted existentially, exhibiting phenomenally that which *Dasein* possesses in its possibility, rather than historically regulated interpretations of Being.

Dasein is a totality of existence (Tubbs, 2004: 59). Exhibiting phenomenally, it involves the thrownness of existence ahead of itself in care and in anticipatory resoluteness, recognises its own end as it moves towards death. This movement also returns to the self to make possibility possible (Tubbs, 2004: 59). The movement forward and back is one and the same – that of the possibility of existence. This is not Hegelian circularity or Kierkegaardian repetition. It is the movement of *Dasein* being thrown into its own possibility which as anticipatory resoluteness, is nothingness.

As such there is no relation between two separate entities and therefore no 'other' that might be considered absolute, or 'God.'²³² To embrace other is to fall into the world of concern and this is inauthenticity.²³³ On the other hand, Kierkegaard is concerned with existence and its relation with Christianity. He posits that Christianity relates to itself as existence; the individual, who also relates as existence, relates to it (Kierkegaard, 1992: 371). When this relation is placed in relation with the Absolute, neither is the same as the other is neither equal to the other. Each exist and relate to the existence of their relation in relation to Other. The third partner interrupts each in its existence, and also interrupts their mutual relation. For Christian education, the imbalance ensures then that the absolute is not reduced to a preconception or a mere label. The rupture of existence illustrated by the ray of darkness fragments the idea of 'God' as an objective totality and opens up the possibility that the absolute might be experienced personally. This experience is not outwardly detected (Kierkegaard, 1992: 382), grasped or possessed (Kierkegaard, 1992: 381), but relates to the aporia that is the knowing of the unknown.

As illustrated in *Either/Or*, and *Stages on Life's Way*, existence as the total ground of Being leads to despair. The temporal and sensory existence of the aesthete is found to result in

²³² It might be argued that the self as a totality is indeed a 'God.' This is represented in the view within National Socialism of the Fuhrer representing the totality of the people and state (Tubbs, 2005: 135)

²³³ As already highlighted, educational literature within the children's spirituality paradigm resonates with this idea, locating spiritual learning outside of the conventions of an organised belief system (Hyde, 2008: 12; Watson, 2010: 14), and considering a life of faith to be an ontological experience (Chater, 1998: 150; Champagne, 2003: 44).

disillusionment (Vardy, 1996: 40), necessitating a move away from immediacy. The ethical existence is similarly thrown into question as the individual considers the impossibility of totalising for truth as well as faith. Kierkegaard's writing, as outlined in Chapter Three, served as a response to the ideas of some Danish Hegelians, whose claim was that truth as a whole is without presupposition. For these scholars, the Hegelian system was total. For Kierkegaard, a totalising perspective betrays the experience of the individual, with whom universality must be in relation (Kierkegaard, 1992: 379).

For the contemporary Christian, Williams suggests that the 'total' perspective set by participants of religion is often actually posited as God's point of view; similarly, the religious 'script' that is presented is deemed the will of God. It is his contention that agreed theological language wields control and therefore lacks integrity (Williams 2000: 4-5). He suggests that religious integrity is only possible when the discourse moves away from the total point of view (Williams 2000: 5-6). He argues that if Christianity is to remain honest, it must not move too far from the particular, with 'the conviction that God is to be sought and listened for in all occasions' (Williams 2000: 7). Without abandoning the 'script' entirely, the Christian is able to, by means of subjectivity, creatively engage with aspects of the faith in the light of the world's complexities. Rather than distorting responses to God, this might 'regenerate' them (Williams 2000: 7).

Again for Kierkegaard, logic must be related to existence in experience - not abstracted or uncontenting. Indeed, in *Philosophical Fragments* he notes that Christian thinking always moves from the starting point of existence and can never be demonstrated totally in actuality (Kierkegaard, 1974: 50). The antidote to a totalising perspective of Christianity, is an expression of the faith in which the individual's subjectivity engages with his or her own subjective experience of it. The subjective learner relates to him or herself subjectively as an existing being; Christianity relates the individual subjectively to matters of the infinite. This is the triadic relation of subjectivity's subjectivity (Tubbs, 2009: 135), which ensures that the self and other never become one.

As the infinite is unknown and unknowable, yet enters temporality on the strength of the absurd, the triadic relation of self and other with Other prevents faith being comprehended, generalizable or measurable (Tubbs, 2005: 27). Yet it still allows for an encounter of the absolute. The interruption of the finite takes place through the recognition of misrecognition that opens up the middle space; it is in this space, in the middle of the triad, that learning

takes place. This is a relation of imbalance, or paradox. In the light of this, Christianity can no longer be self-sufficient.

6.4 The Paradox

In seeking to know the unknowable, the Christian learns the dilemma of faith (Rose, 1992: 42). The relation of faith and understanding for Kierkegaard is a paradox (Kierkegaard, 1974: 46). As Vardy explains, in the paradox the primacy of faith over reason suggests the individual must take a risk, staking one's spiritual life and as such meeting the highest and most difficult demands (Vardy, 1996: 31). Vardy describes how in *Concluding Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, Kierkegaard presents 'Religion B' as the relinquishing of understanding and thinking, allowing the individual to embrace the absurdity of the paradox (Vardy, 1996: 58-9; Kierkegaard, 1992: 556). Similarly, Rose suggests that when the paradox comes into existence, the individual has 'the moment around which everything revolves' (Rose, 1992: 43). The paradox is the ultimate example of imbalance. It requires that the individual let go of accepted representations of Christian precepts such as God and Saviour 'lest understanding destroy their meaning' (Rose, 1992: 37), for a faith that exists in a broken relation with the infinite.

In *Philosophical Fragments*, Kierkegaard's pseudonym Johannes Climacus explains that in the paradox, man and his self-knowledge repeatedly collide with the unknown (Kierkegaard, 1974: 48), reinforcing their absolute difference and confirming that reason cannot understand 'God' by itself (Kierkegaard, 1974: 57). The infinite cannot be thought finitely, just as the understanding cannot negate itself to the absolute without the intervention of thought. Hence, the relation must be re-imagined. Rather than attempt understanding, the Christian must make the move away from obtaining God's factual being in order to expose the condition in which the temporal individual might dialectically experience the infinite as given by the unknown God.

When the individual accepts absolute difference (Kierkegaard, 1974: 119), God is able to reveal 'himself' eternally as subjective truth. The key here is that truth is eternal, not merely objective or subjective. It concerns what it means to be human in relation to the infinite God. It is given in the moment of acceptance and is a gift. It is in this moment that spiritual understanding is illuminated as faith. This is difficult to grasp epistemologically; however, Vardy cites Rahner who suggests that this unknowing might inspire a sense of the mystery of faith (Vardy, 1996: 17). By introducing the idea of incarnation, Kierkegaard provides an illustration of how the paradox is made manifest. He writes: 'the incarnation makes the

paradox possible' (Kierkegaard, 1974: 68). When God became man, the infinite effected an absolute relation with the individual. The paradox came into existence (Rose, 1992: 43).

In the death and resurrection of the incarnate Christ, the absolute difference between the individual with the infinite was annulled. The power of sin was broken and the gift of grace was given. This is offensive to reason (Kierkegaard, 2009: 120), yet in the resurrection moment, the paradox of the incarnation revealed the illusion of absolute difference and the self-sufficiency of the thinking individual was ruptured. In the moment, God was given to man, allowing for the possibility of an absolute relation with the temporal individual - not in totality, but as broken halves of their relation.

This moment has been characterised in this thesis so far as the thunderbolt, the ray of darkness or the breakthrough, all in which the self-sufficiency of the finite or in-itself is interrupted, and the truth of the eternal is revealed (Vardy, 1996: 12). Here in the broken middle between the finite and infinite, the paradox allows for the discovery of truth.

Kierkegaard writes: 'The understanding sets itself aside while the paradox gives itself' (Kierkegaard, 2009: 128). As Vardy states, the decisive moment is when the individual comes to learn his (or her) eternal truth (Vardy, 1996: 11-2) and this is the moment of coming to faith.

6.5 The moment

In contradiction to the Socratic educational ideal in which the self-knowledge of the learner is the knowledge of God (Kierkegaard, 1974: 14), and learning involves an occasion in which the answer is contained in the questioning (Kierkegaard, 1974: 17-8; 29-9),²³⁴ Kierkegaard in *Philosophical Fragments*, describes learning as a moment. When the occasion, as for Socrates, is the possibility of the learner learning his or her own truth, truth is already within and becomes its own absolute. However, in the moment, the paradox is made manifest as the truth of the absolute is imparted to the contingent learner. Like Job's thunderbolt moment, the moment when the absolute enters temporality is decisive (Kierkegaard, 1974: 22). It

²³⁴ In *Concept of Irony* Kierkegaard proposes that by the single individual avoiding tension i.e. between history and philosophy (Kierkegaard, 1989:10), temporality and consciousness (Kierkegaard, 1989: 11) and between recollection and a dual directional approach to learning (Kierkegaard, 1989: 11), 'he has left nothing by which a later age can judge him' (Kierkegaard, 1989: 12). This highlights the inadequacies of recollection and self-sufficiency, which are exposed more fully in this text and the texts that underpin the current discussion.

brings an awareness of new life. It inspires the transformation of the individual from a state of non-being to being, as the learner becomes aware of his or her error and is given the truth.

The individual however is not only given the truth, but also the condition for learning the truth. As suggested by Westerhoff, Bridger and Yust, through the gift of faith with which each person is blessed,²³⁵ the individual is given the capacity for learning the truth. However, it is the intervention of the eternal that provides the condition in which this might take place. Not working for knowledge or content but relationship, the condition serves to reveal the space that is itself the potentiality for the moment. Whilst the contingent experience of the learner is the starting point, it is not the end; therefore, the ontological perspectives of Nye, Hyde, Hart and others from within Paradigm Two cannot contribute fully to this education. Furthermore, the learner does not move towards an acceptance of any agreed truth, therefore also rendering perspectives in Paradigm One inadequate. Rather, in the new perspective, the teacher (or the God) resolves to reveal 'himself' in order to win the love of the learner and bring new life. As a result, self-sufficiency is lost to the God. The individual is not a commodity. The new life is a gift that reimagines the learner's relation with the absolute and in the middle space, allows for the re-learning of truth.

The moment in which truth is given through the occasion signifies the nexus of the paradoxical relation of the individual and eternal. It occurs when the eternal (the teacher/the god) comes into relation with the temporal and is realised in existence. Kierkegaard writes: 'the moment makes its appearance when the eternal resolve comes into relation with an incommensurable occasion' (Kierkegaard, 1974: 30).²³⁶ The God is resolved to reveal himself and this is made manifest in the incarnation of Christ. Kierkegaard notes the incarnation as the absolute paradox, as God in Christ becomes man. In the incarnation, the truth that Christ reveals, is not the truth of a totality but the truth of being human in relation to the eternal.

As the paradoxical relation of God and man in Christ cannot be understood but embraced as a gift (Kierkegaard, 1974: 68), so too is learning. What occurs in the moment is not to be understood rationally but embraced as unknown. Kierkegaard writes: reason and the paradox encounter one another happily in the moment, when the reason sets itself aside and the paradox bestows itself' (Kierkegaard, 1974: 73). In the paradox, God gives the condition for unknowing, reveals the gift of eternity and in the moment brings the learner into eternal

²³⁵ See page 135.

²³⁶ The nexus is significant for the current discussion and will be explored in more detail in Chapter Seven. As already noted, this is illustrated by Gardiner (1988: 7), Rose (1992: 53) and Tubbs (2005: 9) as the Janus face which represents the meeting of the eternal and temporal and as its broken middle.

relation with his or her historical existence (Kierkegaard, 1974: 76). This is the moment of faith. In summary: in the moment, man receives the same condition which is the requisite for understanding eternal truth (Kierkegaard, 1974: 77).

This affects a change in the individual. It affords encounter. The truth here is not what is already within the learner, but that which is given in the moment. What is given, is the paradox. Vardy comments on this, concluding that faith accepts the paradox. Furthermore, faith involves the commitment of the individual who lives in a subjective relationship with an absolute God (Vardy, 1996: 19). This life is described by Kierkegaard as the religious state and concerns what authentic Christian living and learning might entail.

6.6 The Religious

In *Concluding Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, an expression of Christianity that renounces the security of reason for the absolute paradox, is described as 'Religion B.' The Christian who prioritises the safety of language and doctrine, yet is also prepared to risk uncertainty, participates in 'Religion A.' The Christian in each expression has made the move to the religious stage of existence. Reflecting the imbalance in the paradoxical relation of subjectivity with 'The Christian Faith', it is now proposed that for authentic faith, Religions A and B must relate. This does not suggest a relation of A=A as outlined earlier. For an authentic experience of Christianity as faith, each must relate as the broken halves of Christianity.

Here, both expressions of religion are necessary; held in tension, the relation of their relation with the Absolute, provides a practical example of the movement of the individual to the absolute within this particular tradition. The external manifestations of Christianity that Religion A provides are not abolished in the life of faith: the truth gained from Religion B which is personal and given to the individual, ensures that faith also corresponds to the lived experience of the learner. This means then, that the interactive and entertaining learning activities described in the Literature Review, that form part of a presentational pedagogy, are not rejected. However, the third way of Christianity, which ensures that the space between the individual and such learning is kept open, allows for Spirit (as learning) to enable the individual to understand and wrestle with the contents of this learning in a way that is fluid, dynamic and continuous. This is the movement to the religious. As a movement of faith, this movement allows for self and other to relate as broken halves, in relation with the Absolute (Tubbs, 2005: 218; Kierkegaard, 1988: x).

This is another example of paradox and as illustrated in *Stages on Life's Way* with love as a metaphor for faith, the movement of the individual to the religious is outlined. This text, introduced in Chapter Three,²³⁷ which concerns the relation of young man with a girl who is the object of his love, reinforces the assertion that it is the tension between knowing and not knowing that is educative. This reflects the suggestion made above that in Christian education, both Religions A and B should be held in tension for their own education. This also underlines the proposition that rather than existing as in other or against other, the reality of the broken middle and the move to the religious allows each to relate to the other in relation to the Absolute for their own truth.

Representing what might be considered the aesthetic nature of Paradigm Two, the girl embodies love and affection. Her loveliness is immediate and the love she seeks in return is likewise immediate (Kierkegaard, 1988: 235). Religiously, she is a 'follower' who has no thought of the infinite or any relation with the Absolute. God is made in her image (Kierkegaard, 1988: 236). The man on the other hand represents the ethical. For him, 'everything is defined in the same way' (Kierkegaard, 1988: 216). He does not succumb to the intimacies of immediate love and to love does not mean to grasp an idea. But this man desires to make the move to the religious state. In so doing, he is prepared to risk his 'life' as he surrenders to love (Kierkegaard, 1988: 222). He is not lost to the girl: he is lost to love. Religiously, he offers the loss of his immediate self to the infinite and thus accepts himself as an individual in relation to eternity. Resonance with the current discussion is clear, and it is now evident that in Christian education, the learning individual, in losing 'religion,' loses himself to God. This is faith.

In terms of knowledge of love, the relationship of the young man and the girl is one of imbalance which leads to misunderstanding; each considers love on his or her own terms. Yet again, it is this misunderstanding that is educative. The man's misunderstanding of what love is in the ethical sense, inspires a desire to embrace it personally and fully. It inspires in him a higher passion. In his reflection on the self and other relation, (in this case through engaging with poetry), he recognises misrecognition; he is able to observe the illusion of the in-itself and thus establish an understanding of the misunderstanding (Kierkegaard, 1988: 417). This understanding of misunderstanding represents the dialectic of both the aesthetic and ethical positions. The man's reflection, which represents the middle term, allows for the possibility of his own learning (Kierkegaard, 1988: 418). Reflection provides the condition in which the man

²³⁷ See page 125.

can transcend the self and other relation, so to make the move to a religious consciousness (Kierkegaard, 1988: 237). As in the dialectic of self and other with Other, the ethical state is not overcome in this move: it is interrupted and subsequently transfigured. And as the misunderstanding ruptures self-sufficiency, the movement of infinite reflection allows immediacy to become transparency to itself (Kierkegaard, 1988: 413-4) and so his perception of it is changed.

The movement of infinite reflection is based on the individual in his ethical state making the leap to the 'other' to experience actuality; this might also be described as the movement to the eternal in order to gain a religious consciousness. In this movement, the ethical state is not negated: it is suspended. In fact, Kierkegaard proposes that the ethical state is demanded (Kierkegaard, 1988: 441). As both Religion A and B, are considered dialectically as unequal partners in a triadic relation with the absolute, the ethical individual is always in relation with 'other' in actuality, and with the eternal in the religious.

The triadic shape of the relation between the individual, actuality and the eternal is important here. Recognising the third partner in the relation, the triad ensures that a middle space is always evident and that the relation remains unequal. It also ensures that each partner is present. However, as subjectivity and the eternal continually engage in the movement of infinite reflection (Kierkegaard, 1988: 417), the pattern of learning changes. In this respect, whilst the contents of faith which represent the ethical state remain, the movement of learning ensures that the learner's perception of them changes. This is a paradox in which there exists a tension between established and revised doctrine. Yet, as already established, the truth is in the tension, and as a result of this, religious knowledge remains unfixed.

As Job discovered, the prioritising of temporal matters in the light of the eternal, will be forced to change. Losing his family and possessions led Job in the moment of understanding to understand God differently. With conviction and experience, he was able to assert: 'the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord' (Job 1:21). And whilst all that was lost was restored, the temporal worth of possessions became secondary to the relationship with God that was gained. Similarly, as Abraham considered the sacrifice of his son for the sake of his God, all ethical obligations were placed on hold (Genesis 22). The leap to the absolute did not negate ethics but suspended them in an act of faith. The return to the ethical world in each case resulted in a restored individual whose movement was made on the strength of the absolute.

The ideas presented here have pedagogical importance and it is necessary now to locate concepts such as imbalance, paradox and 'the moment' in an educational context. In a new perspective of Christian education, learning takes place in the moment which reveals the middle space of the self and other in relation with the absolute Other. The task for the Christian educator is to manage and protect this space that is the potentiality for the 'moment.' In so doing, learning should not strive for content or outcome but seek to risk self-sufficiency for the absolute. As Williams in 'Ray of Darkness' states:

we are struggling for a discipline that stops me taking myself for granted as the fixed centre of a little universe and allows me to find and lose and refind myself constantly in the interweaving patterns of a world I did make and do not control (Williams, 2003: 120-1).

The aim of the current thesis is to propose how educators allow for the rupture that provides the space in which learners can come to an authentic understanding of God. The following material explores the movement of learning as it relates to self and other, including a consideration of what representation in the middle space might look like. The movement, as suggested above, begins with misrecognition.

6.7 Misrecognition

In *Mourning becomes the Law*, Gillian Rose writes about the drama of misrecognition. Her observations are based on the relation of self and other as described in Hegel's *Phenomenology* and in her text, Rose attempts to re-claim the system from the 'caricatures and errors' of (mis)interpretation (Rose, 1996: 72). She cites the ideas of Heidegger and Marx as examples of such interpretations (Rose, 1996: 71). Rather than noting the imperialism, domination and totality that are often associated with Hegel,²³⁸ she argues that the *Phenomenology* promotes an educational perspective of provisionality and discord in a 'ceaseless comedy in which our aims and outcomes constantly mismatch each other' (Rose, 1996: 72). This is the comedy of the Unhappy Consciousness, which continues as self and other misrecognise and struggle in the dialectic of life and death.

Rose identifies that, as opposed to the subjective truth that in-itself is universal, truth for Hegel accepts the part of truth that whilst being subjective, exceeds subjectivity (Rose, 1996: 72-3). Furthermore, she notes that in this comedy, subjective actors (whilst playing out an interest in the truth of others), actually deceive: their real interest is 'without substance' (Rose, 1996: 73). This then reveals the folly of totality and acknowledges the necessity of

²³⁸ See Chamberlain and Ree, 1998: 27-30.

relation. For Rose, the relation must be unequal; she thus outlines three ways in which misrecognition between self and other becomes the starting point for learning.

Her first point concerns mutual recognition. Mutual recognition, noted earlier as $A=A$,²³⁹ implicates the self-relation of two forms of self-consciousness. Their relation depends on what is recognised of themselves in relation to the other. Each is equal and as such this is dualism. As Rose argues, all dualistic relations are 'attempts to quieten and deny the broken middle' (Rose, 1996: 75). This is unsatisfactory for authentic learning and as outlined in Chapter Two of the current thesis, results in separation and alienation. However, it is the *failure* of mutual recognition in a separating out of self-consciousness, and their refusal to recognise each other as self-relation, that highlights the educational value of misrecognition. This failure provides the opportunity for the relation to be reworked. Whilst critical of dualism, Rose does not deny its significance: for misrecognition, mutual recognition must first be in place. Here, the broken middle which arises out of misrecognition posits the relation of $A=A$ in a dialectical relation with self-relation, so that the actuality of the in-itself has truth in the relation with the relation (Rose, 1996: 75). Mediation is also a vital part of the learning process and Rose asserts that as each 'self' is constantly being reformed and re-imagined, each learns of itself in a way that is unfixed and unstable. This movement of learning not only reflects Kierkegaard's ideas as outlined above, but also the educational premise of *Bildung*, to be explored shortly.

In the second point Rose, describes the dialectical relation as triune. This is the same as the triad that has featured regularly in the thesis so far: the triune shape places otherness in relation to the self-relating of the other. Rose suggests that the short-hand term for this three-way relation is Spirit and that Spirit inspires the education of the self. Significantly, and again reminiscent of earlier material, the triad ensures that no partner has the upper hand. For example, contingency (or the ethical) is not extinguished; neither is the law (or truth) the driving factor in learning. There is no actuality, therefore no space for domination or totality (Rose, 1996: 75). Regarding Christianity then, this prevents either the public and private expressions of Christianity from becoming the dominant aspects of a life of faith, and provides the potentiality for Spirit, in the middle space, to educate and transform.

Finally, Rose asserts that the broken middle reconfigures relation. She does not aim to destabilise dualism, but to inspire a new educational shape. In highlighting the need for the recognition of the misrecognition of mutual recognition, and misrecognition of the law that

²³⁹ See page 119.

had induced dualism, the triune shape provides an alternative. In the middle of this unequal triune relation is learning, identified in the current thesis as Spirit. Furthermore, the meaning of learning is now identified as 'Bildung.' Rose describes 'Bildung' as 'formation or education which is intrinsic to the phenomenological process' (Rose, 1996: 72). It also involves a movement of learning that is a reflection between unequal partners. As a provisional process, it is authentic to both self and other in their relation with self-relation. Therefore, it presents a movement that is significant to this thesis and so is considered in some detail now.

6.8 Bildung

At the outset of this section, it must be highlighted that although an account of Bildung's role in the proposal of a new ethos for education is significant, the concept can also be problematic. Here, an historical consideration of Bildung and its developments, gives way to critical appraisal before highlighting how in the light of Kierkegaard, ideas regarding Bildung might contribute to conclusions in this thesis.

In the chapter 'Reflections on the Future of a Modern Educational Ideal,' featured in the reader *Educating Humanity: Bildung in Postmodernity*, Biesta describes Bildung as an educational process that brings 'the individual in touch with what is general or universal and enduring' (Biesta, 2003: 63). In its original inception, details of which are outlined shortly, Bildung concerns a learning relationship that interacts between self and other; in a transcendent manner, it also moves beyond the present and particular, and as such counteracts universality (Biesta, 2003: 64). In this respect, it is congruent with the perspectives outlined in the current thesis. However, Biesta argues that a contemporary renaissance of Bildung has distorted the relation. That is, he proposes that since the 1980s, new ideas regarding Bildung have been conscripted for the purposes of general education. For example, the word 'Bildung' is often applied as an alternative to 'education.' This serves only to simplify Bildung and this consequently pertains to 'universality' or in the rhetoric of Kierkegaard, totality (Biesta, 2003: 63). As Biesta argues, this is antithetical to the spirit of Bildung.

As Prange outlines, some contemporary translations of the term 'Bildung' include notions such as education, growth, shape and training (Prange, 2004: 502), all of which again are removed from its formative application. Part of the problem is that having no obvious translation from German, meanings given to it are merely 'circumscriptions' and do not do justice to the complexity of its learning relationships (Prange, 2004: 502). When applied to 'whatever

relates to learning and education,' Prange argues that often Bildung is utilised as a paragon of all that is good (Prange, 2004: 502) and represents the unity of education's purpose and implementation (Prange, 2004: 503). When represented as a pillar or paradigm to aspire to, he argues that it is hard to stand up against this interpretation, thus allowing the administrators and 'experts' in education to retain control over learning processes and values. This he argues, invites political hegemony.

According to Nordenbo, the German word 'Bildung' relates to the noun 'bild' that means image, with the suffix 'ung' concerning process. Thus, it concerns something or someone who actively participates in the process of learning. Here the individual is an agent who, in the act of education, takes part in his or her own formation (Nordenbo 2003: 25). As such the telos of learning is individual freedom. However, the agent of Bildung is not the agent of Paradigm Two, nor the self-sufficient agent of Chapter Five. This agent learns through relation.

Presented as neo-humanist theory, early ideas concerning Bildung, from German educator Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), are significant. 'Dismissive of a religious interpretation of existence' (Nordenbo 2003: 31), von Humboldt proposes Bildung as the personal development of the individual into Being and within temporality (von Humboldt, 2000: 58). This is a reactionary view to that held by many at the time that the individual's meaning of life was to secure the 'eternal' status achievable through Christianity.

As Hamilton points out, von Humboldt's theory counteracted Ramist thinking, in which it was proposed that knowledge can be impressed upon the mind in a process similar to that of a printing press (Hamilton, 1990: 12-3). Informing the development of universities based on humanist principles, where the ideal is the 'harmonious development of man,' von Humboldt's ideas concern the individual through Bildung succeeding in self-formation to negate external influences (Nordenbo 2003: 29), and thus prioritise the personal over hegemonic hierarchies. The result is personal freedom and growth in a life endowed with 'as rich a content as possible' (Nordenbo 2003: 32).

In his short fragment 'Theory of Bildung' (2000), von Humboldt first argues that the purpose of learning is not to gain the contents of knowledge, but to afford an individual's 'inner improvement' (von Humboldt, 2000: 58). He or she represents humanity as a 'rich and worthy substance' (von Humboldt, 2000: 59) whose actions secure value as Being. The actions of the individual do not take place in isolation, but occur in relation with 'other' who here is named 'world.' Between self and other is 'the most general, most animated and most unrestrained

interplay,' resulting in the 'attempt of the will to become free and independent in itself' (von Humboldt, 2000: 58). With this freedom comes the potentiality for human development, with the possibility of learning arising from what occurs in the process of interplay.

The interplay between self and other is a continuous movement. The individual reaches beyond him or herself to 'external objects' but reflects back into one's own inner being 'that which he undertakes outside himself' (von Humboldt, 2000: 59). As it is essential that the individual is not alienated in selfhood, interplay ensures that there is a 'resemblance' between self and other; the self and world are linked though not unified. The relation also ensures that a diversity of 'tools,' including the senses and feeling, allow for different ideas regarding the concept of the world to be shaped, and rather than being 'acquainted with it from all sides' (von Humboldt, 2000: 59), there is no singular means of understanding one's experiences. Plurality contributes to learning as much as objectivity. As Lovlie and Standish summarise, 'Bildung starts with the individual embedded in a world that is at the same time that of the differentiated other' (Lovlie and Standish, 2003: 3).

The relation and movement here might be considered Hegelian and indeed as a contemporary of von Humboldt, Hegel is cited as also providing a neo-humanist idealist view of Bildung (Nordenbo, 2003: 33). Nordenbo suggests that being 'confronted with continual contradiction,' the circularity of Hegel's *Phenomenology* reflects the driving of the individual's consciousness outward to the sphere beyond, to be then internalised subjectively. This movement provides a subjective insight into the objective world that in turn transforms objectivity. The dynamic relationship evades knowledge in-itself and considers the interaction to be the Spirit of learning (Nordenbo, 2003: 32). Yet it is also considered a systematic movement whose outcome is absolute knowledge.

Concerned that his idea of learning might easily become systematised, von Humboldt highlights the risk to learning that circularity might induce. As a circular movement, Bildung would no longer be a process but 'merely scholarship' (von Humboldt, 2000: 60). For von Humboldt, the telos is not absolute knowledge, rather the freedom of the learning individual posited against the universalising political systems and schemes that 'own' learning. He writes: 'the ideal becomes greater if one measures the exertion it requires rather than the object that it is to represent' (von Humboldt, 2000: 60); in other words, the action of learning takes priority over the outcome. Rather than concerning involvement from universalising influences, it instead concerns the 'upbringing' of an independent and engaged individual

(Nordenbo, 2003: 31), whose actions in relation with the world allow for an awareness of Being and uncontrolled personal growth.

Although the literature of children's spirituality features little of Bildung per se, the idea of a creative interplay between self and other underpins Hay and Nye's theory of 'relational consciousness' (Hay and Nye, 2006: 116). Here the relation of the world, others and God with the individual, allows for an awareness of spiritual understanding that has an ontological basis, so to inspire inductive learning. Furthermore, the theories of faith development highlighted in Chapter Five also represent examples of interplay. Located within the Christian tradition, the movement of faith development includes the individual's interplay with spiritual images as a means by which he or she might access the spiritual. The significance of the participant in the learning process likens the theories of Westerhoff and Yust to Bildung more than the didactic approaches of Paradigm One presented in the Literature Review. However as highlighted in Chapter Five, the aim of such faith development theory is for learners to possess their understanding. In Bildung, the process is its own aim and its own meaning.

This is illustrated in an early edition of the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, in which Heins Gunther-Heimbrock underlines how Bildung is relevant to learning in Christian spiritual education. Bildung here is described as a productive and creative process that allows children to shape their own world view. With the telos of personal freedom, Bildung is posited as the 'concept which human formation is aiming at' (Gunther-Heimbrock 1999: 51), and identified as the means by which learners might become aware of their 'personal capacity to develop their own theology' (Gunther-Heimbrock 1999: 52). Drawing on data gained from his study involving children's pictorial representations of God, the author proposes that through the process of painting or drawing, a 'playful interaction' takes place between traditional conceptions of God, and the inner and outer worlds of the learner. Reminiscent of von Humboldt's interplay, he describes the painting process as an example of 'creative subjectivity' in which the emotional life of the student contributes to his or her own representations. The provisional nature of these representations is noted and whilst the tradition is not rejected, it is suggested how the student's own perceptions continually evolve (Gunther-Heimbrock 1999: 55).

Gunther-Heimbrock argues that when *Bildung*, as the process of creating rather than the object created is evaluated, one might gain an insight into how children's ²⁴⁰ views (of God) are constructed, imagined and even changed. What is important is the interplay that takes place between the learner and the world. Here the 'between' is represented by the activity of painting. In the middle space between the traditional and personal, and as the child paints, Spirit as the third partner inspires the child to present, evaluate and re-present his or her own God-conception.

As illustrated by the tension between Religions A and B described above, both the tradition and the personal life of the child are held in an unequal relation (Rose, 1996: 72). Unlike the liberationist ideas presented earlier,²⁴¹ there is no overcoming. The middle space is the locus of learning. In the middle, learning that has meaning takes place. Both educator and learner value something other than the end result and in 'seeing seeing,' an idea taken from Merleau-Ponty, (Gunther-Heimbrock 1999: 58), they come to understand (the idea of God) differently (Gunther-Heimbrock 1999: 58).

Gunther-Heimbrock writes: 'the creative element of such an awareness, to see something with other eyes, is part of human freedom, the concept which human formation (*Bildung*) is aiming at' (Gunther-Heimbrock 1999: 58). Thus, he proposes that religious or spiritual education might become a creative process that considers the idea of God as a transitional object rather than a 'snapshot' (Gunther-Heimbrock 1999: 59).²⁴² Not dissimilar to the ideas of Ana Maria Rizzuto outlined in the Literature Review, the learner's idea of God adapts and evolves in the light of his or her personal context, experience and encounters with others (Rizzuto, 1979: 209). Through the interplay between the self and each context, the movement enables the learner to make meaning for him or herself.

In a more recent edition of the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, John Pridmore also considers the importance of *Bildung* in religious education. Noting the word 'formation' as a comparable English term (Pridmore 2004: 285), Pridmore draws on the ideas of Eighteenth Century German educationalist Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, for whom religious education concerns interiority. Based on his belief that religious consciousness is inherent

²⁴⁰ As Gunther –Heimbrock's study involved children, the discussion here also refers to children. However, in the context of the current thesis, the same ideas might be applied to any learning individual who, as a student or a teacher, takes part in education as creative interplay.

²⁴¹ See pages 36-7.

²⁴² The 'transitional object' will be considered in more detail later in the following chapter.

within each individual, Bildung in this context involves 'arousing awareness already present' (Pridmore 2004: 285). He suggests that exposing learners to religious (and other spiritually influenced) imagery of 'the divine' provides the inspiration for formative learning. This learning is initiated within the learner who through wonder and a sense of the holy is then able to glance at 'the infinite' (Pridmore 2004: 285). The movement here differs to that of 'interplay' and might be considered a more linear movement with no obvious return to self or impact of 'the infinite' on the immediate. However, Pridmore's use of the image as the starting point for religious awareness is significant to the current discussion and is considered further in the following chapter.

According to Masschelein and Ricken, Bildung might be viewed historically in two waves. The first is founded on Bildung's eighteenth century German roots, as introduced above, with its critical principle of education being the emancipation of self from the state through the creative interaction between individuality and sociality (Masschelein and Ricken, 2003: 140). In the second wave, identified from end of the nineteenth century, a more romantic paradigm sees the individual as a universal; education therefore involves the development of the self with no need for dependence on 'other' (Masschelein and Ricken, 2003: 140-1.) Spirit as learning here is primarily concerned with self-creation with education as a law of its own.

In another chapter of the reader *Educating Humanity: Bildung in Postmodernity*, Peukert describes this second wave as a Negative Utopia which, as opposed to the neo-humanist Bildung, has as its telos the possibility of the human subject that understands self-formation as the 'presence of the absence' (Peukert 2003: 77). Peukert likens this to Heidegger's nearness of Being, where learning is not historically determined but 'springs from the deeper sources' than those determined externally (Peukert 2003: 76). The self, the central participant in the learning process, is provisional and always issuing forth to the future: it is always in a state of 'not yet.' The outcome is undetermined and self-formation never is completed (Peukert 2003: 111). The individual here comes into Being through the continual reconstructing and deconstructing of the self (Peukert 2003: 106; 111). Bildung thus has no impact beyond the self. In eschewing the influence of 'other,' it is the beginning and the end of learning.

This is also a feature of postmodern Bildung illustrated by Giddens for example, who refers to the process of self-formation as the 'trajectory of the self.' Here the life of the learning individual represents a continuous movement of reflection and reconstruction without reference to an external entity (Giddens, 1991: 75). Whilst there is a strong resonance

between Pridmore's notion of Bildung and that of the second wave, Heins Gunther-Heimbrock's journal article presents a slightly nuanced relation which is more aligned to the views of Rose and Kierkegaard than von Humboldt and Giddens, and thus provides the inspiration for a new perspective.

Rather than proposing a two-way interaction between self and other, Gunther-Heimbrock's idea that includes the notion of 'seeing seeing,' incites a self that is in relation with the relation of self and Other. This relation has been identified throughout this thesis as 'subjectivity's subjectivity' (Tubbs, 2009: 135). Bildung is the means by which the individual expresses, evaluates and refines one's responses to the 'data' provided by the outer world in the light of one's inner world. It takes place in the middle of the triune relational shape. There is little in von Humboldt's fragment that pertains to a middle space. His educational interplay is reminiscent of the immediate relation of mutual recognition, again reflecting for example Hay and Nye's interaction between self and other in 'relational consciousness.' What Gunther-Heimbrock's thesis suggests however, is whilst interactions between self and world raise spiritual awareness and contribute to subjectivity, there is a third partner in learning. When self-consciousness is in relation with relational consciousness, a middle space is opened up, the meaning of which is Bildung. This is the unequal relation of misrecognition (Rose, 1996: 75).

von Humboldt's theory of Bildung concerns the interaction between the self and the world as a creative interplay. As already stated, this has Hegelian overtones and although striving to avoid becoming systematic, it is a 'necessary relation' (Standish and Lovlie, 2003: 3). Here self and other relate as A=A. In contrast, the romantic idea considers the individual as potentiality; however, being self-sufficient, this individual consciousness also exists as a totality. It seems that historical Bildung considers education to be the movement of the self-sufficient 'I' either in opposition to or embedded within social culture for the actualisation of the individual and the transformation of the learning environment. Both are insufficient for conclusions in the current thesis.

In his chapter 'The Promise of Bildung,' Lars Lovlie comes some way towards readdressing the ideals of both 'waves' of Bildung for contemporary education. He suggests that Bildung might be illustrated by a mobius strip that represents a continuous connection between its inside and outside. This is not the circular movement that von Humboldt wishes to avoid. It is not complete as in Hegel's system. It reflects more a Kierkegaardian broken circularity in which each side meet but are never unified. This is a dynamic representation of interplay, regarded

as an ongoing process, with no fixed result. Lovlie writes: 'recollection of history consists in seeing the old in the altered perspective of the present.' History (and/or culture) in creative interplay is both maintained and changed: 'the existence that has been, now comes into being' (Lovlie, 2003: 151).

As the mobius strip represents a paradox with no end, Lovlie suggests it is likewise paradoxical for the past and future to meet in continuous learning. This is the requirement for the proposed new perspective. Likened to Kierkegaard's movement of repetition, as an asymmetrical relation, the paradox that the mobius strip illustrates, involves the dynamic movement of reflexivity that allows for the education and transformation of the present individual in the light of his or her past.²⁴³ It also reflects the movement outlined earlier in terms of Kierkegaard's *Stages on Life's Way*,²⁴⁴ in which the single individual is disturbed in his temporality and taken beyond the immediate towards a concern for the eternal.

Similar to the process highlighted by Rose, mediation between the relational partners assures that each 'self' is constantly being reformed and re-imagined, and each learns of itself in a way that is unfixed and unstable. As also indicated by Williams and cited at the end of Chapter Five, the broken relation provided by the moment of rupture that is the ray of darkness, allows for the individual to understand him or herself more fully in relation to the eternal; like the movement of the mobius strip, this understanding is never complete. Accordingly, reflecting the ideas of Gunther-Heimbrock, the representation resulting from this movement is unfixed. As the image or 'bild' is always in process, so too is its meaning.

In addition to the analogy of the mobius strip, Bildung is illustrated by Mortensen as 'doubling' (Mortensen 2003: 121). Alluding to the Wordsworth poem 'To the Cuckoo,' Mortensen outlines how in this poem, the present experience of an individual is transformed on hearing the call of a cuckoo. As he is reminded of his childhood experiences, the protagonist's present is mediated by his past for a re-imagined future. Here Bildung does not represent the learning individual embedded in or as opposition to history and culture, but acknowledges the separation that allows for the mediation of the sensory present in the light of recollection of the contingent past, and the movement forward to create new ideas.

Mortensen describes doubling as 'the dialectical relationship between that which exists and is perceivable by the senses and that in nature that cannot be captured or grasped' (Mortensen

²⁴³ The idea of Bildung as the unfixed representation of the movement is significant to this thesis and will be given further attention in the next chapter.

²⁴⁴ See pages 148-9.

2003: 122). Self-formation is rooted within experience. However, this is not the immediate experience of the in-itself. The value of the experience lies in the illumination of the self in relation to other, as well as the present and future in relation to the past (Mortensen 2003: 122). Thus, it is reminiscent of a form of recollection: a recollection that ensures that immediacy is transcended and the prior experience of the individual is acknowledged. The movement is not only backwards but involves a return. Mediation allows the impact of the prior experience to address the present. Mortensen explains that in recollection, the learner is 'searching for something that cannot be found even though it exists' (Mortensen 2003: 121). This is the means by which he or she re-evaluates the present for the future. This then is more than recollection: it is repetition.

In its acknowledgement of the past and future of the learning individual, repetition becomes the consciousness of what is recollected. As in doubling, it involves a movement backwards and forwards. Indeed, as Kierkegaard states:

repetition and recollection are the same movement, just in opposite directions, because what is recollected has already been is thus repeated backwards whereas genuine repetition is repeated forwards (Kierkegaard, 2009: 3).

However, it is also through the negation of immediacy and in the relation 'between' reality and ideality that the meaning of Bildung becomes known (or in the rhetoric of Mortensen, the relation between the sensory present and that which cannot be known). In highlighting the significance of Bildung for the current discussion, it is necessary to finally explore 'repetition' in relation to Bildung, in order to propose an authentic educational movement and illustrate how this movement might contribute to a new perspective for Christian education.

6.9 Repetition

Written under the pseudonym Constantine Constantius, *Repetition* begins by highlighting the inadequacies of Socratic recollection. Similar to the critique presented in *Philosophical Fragments*, this deficiency pertains to the idea that truth is already present in aesthetic immediacy and as such there is no need for any occasion of learning, or any teacher. As there is no historical 'other,' learning is negative, concerning only what is not-known (Kierkegaard, 2004: 86). For Kierkegaard, this is an epistemological shortcoming that leads to unhappiness (Kierkegaard, 2009: 3).

Repetition on the other hand is contra recollection. Its significance is in the unequal relation of past and future as known and unknown; it concerns not what has gone but what is to come. Founded upon the contingent and historical, it relies on a revelation from the unknown future

on the grounds of the condition provided by 'the teacher' in the present. In repetition, 'that which has existed now comes into existence' (Kierkegaard, 2009: 19). Yet repetition does not bring an exact reflection of the past into the present (Kierkegaard, 2009: 37-8); rather it allows the individual to respond to the present in the light of recollection (Kierkegaard, 2009: 39), thus re-learning the present so to inform the future. As the nexus between past and future, repetition enables the learning individual to recognise who he or she is, has been and can be (Tubbs, 2004: 94). This is a formative movement, generated not only as a result of the relation of past and future as in doubling, but as the educational significance of the relation.

As often in Kierkegaard's texts, a story provides an allegory for his philosophical thinking. In this case, the narrative outlines the author's investigation into how repetition might be possible in love. The young man (introduced in Chapter Five), in love with a girl yet not in a relationship with her, is able to recollect his feelings. But the movement is only within him. Having no external expression for his love, he longs for her yet remains at a distance from her (Kierkegaard, 2009: 7-8). His love is ideal and as yet has not been brought into reality. With this comes the unhappiness cited above. Indeed, the author stresses that this man is far from realising this ideal love due to his 'melancholy soul' (Kierkegaard, 2009: 48). For his own education, the young man requires repetition to understand who he is in relation to the girl and to gain clarity regarding his situation. (Kierkegaard, 2009: 49). For instance, he recognises that he does not know how to love the girl in reality and never will.

As the story continues, the young man wishes to break away from any affair. It is too difficult. Yet in and through his torment, he becomes aware that this unequal relation is the beginning of his learning. Kierkegaard as Climacus writes: 'repetition is how recollection is known' (Kierkegaard, 2009: 93). The paradox of actuality and ideality is indeed his learning tool. In his commentary on the situation of the young man, Kierkegaard explains that whilst the girl does not have actuality, it is not her as herself that is significant. The relation the young man has with her, albeit ideal, is that which illuminates who he really is. He comes to learn about himself in an ideal relation to her. She is his teacher: one who brings him to learn from his situation. Kierkegaard writes: 'the girl has not actuality but is simply a reflection of, and occasion for, movements within him' (Kierkegaard, 2009: 49).

This educative movement is repetition. It is not the 'trajectory of the self' that involves a linear progression forward, but a movement that opens up the middle space between ideality and reality. The relation between what is recollected (his innate love) and what is mediated for the moment of reflection (his learning through the torment), is unequal; the relation that the

movement inspires is a misrelation. In the movement of repetition, the relationship of self and other cannot be reconciled (Tubbs, 2004: 86-7). As such the third partner, identified here as Spirit, keeps this relation open. What is learnt in the movement of repetition, and in the middle space as reflection, is the truth of education.

For the young man, the significance of his learning is not his possession of the girl, but his understanding gained through loss. In the concluding section of *Repetition*, Kierkegaard reflects on this in philosophical and religious overtones. He describes how the young man recognises the difference between the ideal outward appearance of love and the tragedy of his situation in reality. This dialectical difference is presented as a struggle. Preventing him from coming close to the girl in question, or indeed receiving the love of any other girl, the young man's personality induces the loss of love and this is difficult. However, this loss allows him to negate the ideality that prevents him from loving in reality. This negation involves the move to the religious: indeed, it for allows for his thinking to become 'ineffably religious' (Kierkegaard, 2009: 80). This establishes the relation of himself with the relation of reality and ideality and, creating the educative triune shape, this allows for a learning situation similar to that described above as 'seeing seeing.'²⁴⁵ Having made the move to the religious, he becomes aware that he is changed (Kierkegaard, 2009: 81). In his return to his immediate state, he is not necessarily able to explain his situation, or fully understand his education (Kierkegaard, 2009: 81), but he knows he has been transformed.

Tubbs notes that what is possessed can only be gained in the educational significance of it being lost. He writes: 'gaining or receiving is learning that possession, loss and gain are the absolute relation of recollection and repetition' (Tubbs, 2004: 93). Loss for the young man involves not only negating the reality of the girl, but also negating his immediate self. In the story of Job, alluded to by the young man, loss comes in the form of the rupture of self-sufficiency (Kierkegaard, 2009: 59). Through the sudden death of his family and livestock, Job recognises the misrecognition of himself in temporality. Drawing on this for his own education, the young man recognises his relation to the girl as a misrecognition of their relation and as such his own self-sufficiency is ruptured.

The rupture provides for the moment in which misrecognition is recognised. Both Job and the young man acknowledge self not as an entity in-itself, but in relation to the relation of self and Other. This unequal relation provides the condition for his surrender and allows the eternal to

²⁴⁵ See page 178.

break through (Kierkegaard, 2009: 69). As in Discourse One of *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*,²⁴⁶ Kierkegaard describes how the eternal breaks into the contingent present to change the perspective of the individual. As in *Philosophical Fragments*, the individual comes to self-understanding not just through recollection but in the light of infinite reflection. Kierkegaard as Climacus correlates the movement of repetition with the unequal relation of the individual and the universal. It is not the grasping of the universal by the individual that inspires learning: it is the rupture of the relation (Kierkegaard, 2009: 78). This inspires the triadic structure in which the single individual is in relation with the other who brings him or her to the realisation of contingent knowledge, so to inspire new understanding and take it forward.

Climacus highlights how in *Repetition* the young man's learning was not transmitted to him, but illuminated through his struggle. Through repetition he was able to lose his self-sufficiency for a 'higher' (religious) consciousness and understand actuality not as the concrete present, but as a re-imagined notion of actuality (Kierkegaard, 2009: 80). So too, Christian education must not be grasped, but experienced as the condition for the breakthrough of the absolute. In consideration of the notion of Bildung as a template for the process of learning, and repetition which establishes the triune relational shape, it is possible now to refer to the proposed new perspective of Christian education as 'Bildung as repetition.'²⁴⁷ This is a working title, which is itself provisional; yet it highlights the significance of the interplay between self and other in learning, and at the nexus of this learning relationship with the eternal, it illuminates how the middle space that is a result of the intervention of the absolute, allows Spirit to inspire learning that is dynamic and authentic, and for a life of faith, transforms.

In 'Bildung as repetition,' the known illuminates the unknown. This paradox might be illustrated in practice through an interactive activity that allows learners to make creative responses to Biblical texts. Following the reading of a Bible passage, learners are given the opportunity to reflect on the text through (for example) writing a poem, drawing a picture or creating something from clay. It is important that the Bible story is presented in its entirety - not paraphrased, modernised nor indeed its difficulties sanitized – and that the story is

²⁴⁶ See pages 144-5.

²⁴⁷ It is antithetical to the nature of this thesis to apply a name or label to the proposed new perspective of Christian education. 'Bildung as repetition' therefore summarises the movement and shape of learning as explored in this thesis but is not to be used as fixed representation. In practice, an educator might describe the new perspective as 'creative reflection' or 'learning as spirit;' yet as the intention is not to propose a method, model or paradigm, again the perspective is not to be limited by any label and addressed variously in the light of each learning context and community.

allowed to speak for itself. No 'teacher' is to offer any meaning; however, Spirit as the teacher, working in the middle space between the learner and the Bible passage, illuminates meaning for the learner, which in turn might be shared with others and inspire meaning for them.

As learners wrestle with what the Bible passage might mean in order to create the piece of art, they are encouraged to draw on both personal contingency and any previous knowledge of the Bible and 'The Christian Faith.' As stated above, both are vital aspects of the learning process. However, the learner is also allowed to surrender any fixed ideas regarding the meaning of stories and thus allow for the absolute to intervene. The absolute illuminates the misrecognition of such immediate representations and in the ongoing reflection through the creative process, Spirit is given the freedom to shape the thoughts and responses of the learner.

In the middle space, which interrupts the ideality of the past and the reality of creating fixed knowledge in the future, Spirit allows the learners to create and recreate meanings that illuminate the relevance of the story for their personal lives. Creative reflection might inspire questioning regarding theological or existential issues, afford clarity regarding the significance of the story for the wider Biblical context, or even apply this significance to life today. As a result of 'seeing seeing,' creative reflection allows the individual to respond to the story in the present in the light of recollection; but as learning takes place in the middle space, it also illuminates new ideas so to inform new meanings for the future.²⁴⁸

These meanings have significance for the personal lives of the learner and so learning is authentic. It is vital that teachers and learners recognise that these meanings are provisional. Following the suspension of the immediate, in the return to self and the ethical world, these meanings must again be suspended, lest they perpetuate the illusion of immediacy. To that

²⁴⁸ *An example from practice illustrates 'Bildung as repetition.'* The examples presented in the latter part of this thesis are based on observation and not part of any research project. Following the reading of the story of Moses at the Burning bush (Exodus 3), a group of children were invited to compose a piece of music to represent the different aspects of the story. After listing characters and events such as the bush, the fire, the angel and the snake, and assigning sound sources to each one, the children struggled to find a suitable sound to represent the character of God. A discussion took place that saw the children wrestling with the ambiguity of having to apply a temporal characterisation (a sound effect) to a transcendent being, who is beyond characterisation. They were equally uncomfortable with the idea that no sound effect should be provided for God, as this would reduce his significance in the story. The children eventually decided to have a cymbal play quietly throughout the music to represent the constant present of God in this story and in their own lives. 'Bildung as repetition' here allowed the children to interact with the idea of God in a way that did not negate formal representations, but inspired a new way of coming to understand the nature of God and the meaning this has for their own lives.

end, 'Bildung as repetition' persists throughout the life of the learner, enables the revision of learning, and thus continues to shape and transform.

The outcomes of 'Bildung as repetition' are the gap, the unknown and the difficulty. 'Bildung as repetition' differs from ideas proposed by Gunther-Heimbrock for example, in its inclusion of scripture. Rather than present learners with the capacity to develop their own theology,²⁴⁹ here the theology of 'The Christian Faith' is accepted. In 'Bildung as repetition,' it is the learner's perception of such theology that develops. Involved in the interplay which takes place as the individual creates, the learner is able to reflect back to prior knowledge regarding the Bible and 'The Christian Faith,' and in the middle space, wrestle with this knowledge in the light of his or her own contingency. This struggle allows for the loss of certainty regarding Biblical hermeneutics,²⁵⁰ in order to reflect forward for new meaning. For Gunther-Heimbrock the reference point, that is the notion of God, is nebulous and therefore more open to the critique as presented in Chapter One.

'Bildung as repetition' furthermore differs from the interplay of Yust presented in Chapter Five,²⁵¹ in that here the fixed meanings attached to religious icons and symbols (including religious language and scripture) are ruptured. Again, it is not the theology per se that is negated but the inherited perceptions. Whereas Yust encourages learners to adopt such symbols and their pre-determined meanings in order to engage spiritually with the religious, in this new perspective, the symbols represent the interface in the light of which repetition reflects backwards to recollect and forwards to inspire new meaning. The role of the symbol, or icon as a transitional object is explored in Chapter Seven, and its significance for the new perspective is noted. At this point and in summary, it might be suggested that 'Bildung as repetition' is not historical or contemporary Bildung, but the dialectical relationship of Bildung's interplay with the movement of repetition.

What Kierkegaard's contribution to the discussion confirms here is that the fixedness of ideas and concepts should be set aside, or ruptured. This includes all that is possible and 'known' regarding matters of the absolute. Images or representations should also be transitory, evolving and re-forming in the light of the interplay between the learner and other. Always in process, the meaning of religious truths also constantly changes, as the learner is changed. The final chapter of this thesis considers further the nature of the 'event' that provides the

²⁴⁹ See page 177.

²⁵⁰ The new perspective proposed in this thesis is not a hermeneutic, but the activity described as an example might be considered as such.

²⁵¹ See pages 128-9.

inspiration for 'Bildung as repetition.' The idea of the image as a transitional object is explored in more detail and more specifically the parable is identified as the icon which is the condition for learning and relearning in this new perspective of Christian spiritual education.

CHAPTER SEVEN: 'BILDUNG AS REPETITION'

7.1 Introduction

As identified in this thesis so far, the task for the Christian educator is to reveal the middle space that is the potentiality for the 'moment' of learning truth. Here truth is not content, form or outcome but that which is inspired within the unequal relation of self and other with an Absolute Other. Learning and the learner are not commodities, but an integral part of a pedagogical process that involves a movement away from content and epistemological certainty. Inciting risk, this involves a leap to the unknown. Fixed perceptions of beliefs are re-imagined and reworked, making it possible to have faith in the Absolute whilst at the same time 'making it impossible to think or narrate it away' (Mortensen, 2003: 137).

This chapter considers how these ideas might become applicable to learning in a perspective now described as 'Bildung as repetition.' Having briefly introduced a learning event that might illustrate the new perspective in practice, this chapter now continues to investigate further the nature of the 'moment' that interrupts immediacy, and considers the role of representation. As much as the thesis began by considering education in terms of work with children, 'Bildung as repetition,' whilst also being relevant to children, represents a movement of learning that is applicable to all learners (including teachers, policy makers and those who create curricula). This chapter begins by focusing on the notion of the transitional object, initially introduced by the American clinical psychologist D.W. Winnicott, and notes how this applies to the proposed new perspective of Christian education.

7.2 The transitional object

In the chapter 'Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena' first published in 1958, Winnicott sheds light on the significance of relation for the perception of an object, and does so in terms of the effects of the separation of a mother and child following birth. When a child is born, the immediate attachment between the mother and child is lost and therefore, for the safety and security of the child, intermediate attachment figures are identified. Winnicott indicates how objects - initially fists and fingers then soft toys or dolls - become such intermediate attachment figures, representing the loss of immediacy and replacing the figure that is 'not-me' (Winnicott, 2002: 1). He purports that this is an object -relationship that places the object at the border of the child's personal experience and establishes the (significant) separation between self and other.

Winnicott proposes that a dialectical movement takes place between what has already been 'introjected' by the mother and the external projection that takes place as the child makes sense of life and the world (Winnicott, 2002: 2). This movement might be described as interplay: indeed, he adheres to the idea that for all human beings, there is an inner reality that experiences interaction with externality. This interaction might be either at odds with or in accord with the other, but in each case, it is significant for human development. Yet a third dimension named 'an intermediate area of experiencing' is also proposed. This is a middle space by which paradoxically, inner and outer realities are kept separate, whilst being also interrelated (Winnicott, 2002: 2). This space is 'between' what is subjectively and objectively perceived (Winnicott, 2002: 3), allowing the child to recall what has been lost and renegotiate what is 'now.' Therefore, it might be considered as an instance of 'doubling',²⁵² introduced by Mortensen in Chapter Six, and reinforced through the movement of repetition.²⁵³

To allow for this negotiation, an object first might be *recognised* as intermediate, representing the first possession residing in the area between awareness and reality (Winnicott, 2002: 3). A corner of a blanket for example, being an example of a 'not-me' figure, symbolises continuity in the child's experience of intimacy. Whilst itself not being the mother, the object embodies the mother-child relation and until replaced by other objects such as hard toys or even sexual partners, it has significance as a reality of its own (Winnicott, 2002: 5). Winnicott makes it clear that it is not the object that is significant but the middle space that provides the condition for inspiring the object as transitional (Winnicott, 2002: 3).

Further to recognition of an object as transitional, such an object or phenomena might also be *created* in the middle space. Winnicott refers to both art and religion as examples; here the provisionality of the middle avoids representation of 'reality' as truth but negotiates the borders of the subjective and external self so that reality cannot be claimed (Winnicott, 2002: 3). Furthermore, he highlights its illusory effects. What art or religion represent or create in this space is illusion. As explained in Chapter Two, illusion is not delusion and as highlighted in Chapter Six through *Repetition* and the short illustration from practice,²⁵⁴ it prevents the learner from claiming 'reality.' Consequently, what is illusory should not be imposed when shared, but embraced as the inspiration for one learning learning.

²⁵² See page 181

²⁵³ See page 183-4.

²⁵⁴ See page 186.

Winnicott visits the idea of symbolism in characterising his ideas. For example, he describes the Eucharist as an example of how symbolism is a reminder of the passion story and the sacrifice of Christ (Winnicott, 2002: 6). The symbol occupies the middle space between fantasy and fact as well as inner and external objects. However, he argues that further to symbolism, the transitional object involves a *process* in which the individual progresses towards experience as a learning tool (Winnicott, 2002: 6). The symbol is not a closed expression of spirituality, rather the inspiration for meaning-making. This has resonance again with the practical idea outlined at the end of the previous chapter. Through play, artistic expression, religious feeling and rituals, the individual is able to affect meaning-making (Winnicott, 2002: 5) and this might be summarised as the essence of both *Bildung* and repetition.

The transitional object then represents the nexus of ideality and reality, past and future as well as the subjective and objective dimensions of existence. In *Educating Humanity: Bildung in Postmodernity*, Mortensen sheds more light on this. He explains that as the substitute for something that was lost (the immediate relation with the mother), the transitional object is the fruit of the separation (Mortensen, 2003: 132). That which is 'not-me' is the learning tool. He also equates the transitional object with a variety of literary forms. Of course, this is not exhaustive since the transitional object might be considered in a myriad of ways; but it is important to note that in all cases, the object alludes to the loss of the immediate relation between self and other (Mortensen, 2003: 132) as well the illusion of representation.

Mortensen describes the metaphor as one of the central ways of leaping the epistemological chasm between old and radically new knowledge. In the movement of doubling, the learner takes something already known but breaks with it in order to see it as something else (Mortensen, 2003: 134-5). Meaning-making thus takes place in the middle space between old and new. Furthermore, Mortensen considers the value of narrative. As a means of 'forming and shaping consciousness' (Mortensen, 2003: 133), he suggests that narratives of any kind mediate between a learner's acquired knowledge of the world and their own identity, allowing them to adapt and explore the structures of the world for themselves. This takes the form of self-transcendence, occurring through and as a result of literary engagement or interplay (Mortensen, 2003: 134).

Significant for this discussion is the literary form finally explored in Mortensen's chapter. Resonating with metaphor and narrative, the parable is described as the means by which both doubling and self-transcendence allow for the learner to interpret his or her own life

(Mortensen, 2003: 135). It is suggested that a parable, as an integral part of human experience, allows learners to make sense of other aspects of life as the two interact. Transcendence allows for the learner to learn what is being learnt, thus effecting the interruption by which mastery in any other kind of story might be evaded. This establishes a triadic structure of learning and as Mortensen writes:

meaning does not arise out of the blue, but as change of, or cross between already existing meanings. In the parabolic exchange or doubling, transcendence of meaning takes place, generating new meaning' (Mortensen, 2003: 136).

The parable, which represents the 'fluid and intermediate position' as the transitional object, allows the learner to reflect on everyday life in its light (Mortensen, 2003: 136). In standing apart from the learning to reflect on the reflections, both doubling and transcendence create 'an imaginative distance to reality' making it 'impossible to get hold of or interpret reality' (Mortensen, 2003: 137). This suggests a new hermeneutic akin to repetition that whilst interpreting the story within the contingent life of the individual, also takes the individual beyond the self to re-evaluate what is already known. As a continuous process, the learner returns to 'reality' transformed, with a different perspective to that held before (Mortensen, 2003: 138).

As cited in Chapter Five, Rowan Williams describes how Christ employed parables as a means for individuals to think again about themselves in relation to God (Williams, 2000: 91). Using the power of story, Christ was able to avoid preaching in the dogmatic sense and similarly avoided presenting fixed meanings. The Biblical parable might now be identified as the condition that is the potentiality for the moment of learning, and will be investigated in more detail later in this chapter. However, it is important to note here how 'Bildung as Repetition' establishes the triune relational shape that allows for the learner to reflect on reflection and so inspire learning for authentic faith.

In 'Bildung as repetition,' the interplay of the individual with the parable (or Bible story as suggested above), establishes the creative interplay of Bildung. This is a relation of ideality and reality, within which (again as suggested above), the learner is able to reflect on Christ's words and consider their meaning. However, ideality is interrupted as the educator and learner allow Spirit, as the 'teacher,' to intervene. This interruption signifies the moment in which ideality (or immediacy) is surrendered and the middle space is opened up for possibility. This inspires the leap of faith that creates the triadic relational shape that is the relation of relations. In the middle space between the relation of interplay and the Absolute,

the learner reflects on what he or she has understood in the reflection. As he or she returns to consider the parable again in the light of this reflection, a more dynamic understanding of what Christ's words might mean is gained. The words are not claimed or possessed, but meaning-making that is both authentic to the lived experience of the learning individual and to the Christian context of the story evolves. This is authentic learning.²⁵⁵

As Mortensen points out, in this new hermeneutic existing meaning is not disallowed. Aspects of Christianity such as the death and resurrection of Christ and the promise of redemption are fundamental to the life of the Christian and should not be denied. However, 'Bildung as Repetition' allows for the given representations of these aspects to be reworked. 'Bildung as repetition' regenerates perceptions of traditionally held truths whilst in the light of the leap to the Absolute, the individual is also changed. Through this new perspective, one is able to encourage a life of faith that is not based on fixed ideas but one that is dynamic, changing and relevant to the ongoing life of the learner.

7.3 Funding the Imagination

An example of a new hermeneutic is offered by Walter Brueggemann in his short book *Texts Under Negotiation* (1993). Utilizing Biblical texts (such as the parable) as learning tools, his ideas are relevant to the current discussion and explored critically now.

Brueggemann's premise is that for the postmodern imagination which pertains to the local, temporal and particular, methods of engaging with Biblical texts offered by ministers or other teachers must also be reflective of the local, temporal and particular (Brueggemann, 1993: 6). Alluding to Lyotard's view of the metanarrative as incredulous (Lyotard, 1997: xxiv; Brueggemann, 1993: 8), Brueggemann asserts that one must not be a master of a text, espousing 'grand claims for God's sovereignty,' but should experience the loss of totality. The reader must approach a text 'not as its master but as its advocate.' He continues to note:

²⁵⁵ In a further example from practice, a group of children listened to the reading of the Biblical parable 'The Lost Sheep' (Luke 15), presented on DVD. The parable was read verbatim from the Bible, yet was characterised by the actor who was dressed up as a shepherd in the location of a field. Following the DVD, the children in small groups were invited to handle artefacts from the story, including other 'precious' items such as jewellery and money. This interplay allowed the children to bring the story into their own existence and to provide the starting point for reflection. They were then asked remember a time when they were lost or when they lost something precious, recalling emotions and actions. In the light of this recollection, they were then invited to consider what Jesus's story meant for the people of his time and for us today. The children's responses were various and unique to each individual and it was stressed that no response was right or wrong. This example of repetition allowed for the learner's own personal lives to contribute to learning regarding the story and subsequently, they were able to learn from each other.

'articulation of God will need to begin again in local, contextual ways' (Brueggemann, 1993: 11).

Brueggemann's proposal is that when one engages with a text, one funds the imagination (Brueggemann, 1993: 19-20). The text becomes part of the mix of objects and resources through which new 'material might emerge' - or as suggested earlier, old material is 'freshly voiced.' This sets up the possibility for a counter-imagination of the world in which one's interaction with a text gives voice to what is learned, but is never claimed as truth (Brueggemann, 1993: 20-21). His notion of self embraces 'existence' as a starting point (Brueggemann, 1993: 29). Yet further to this, the move to *faith* drives 'the reason for existence' out beyond the self to an 'inexplicable' dimension that 'redefines all our modes of reasonableness' (Brueggemann, 1993: 29). Whilst existence is the inspiration for learning, faith embraces Other (Brueggemann, 1993: 29). This is resonant with Levinas's idea considered in Chapter Four, that the subjective self, through crossing 'barriers of immanence' (Levinas, 2003: 27) welcomes the 'absolutely Other' (Levinas, 2003: 33).²⁵⁶

When engaging with a text in this hermeneutic, the learner recognises the tradition of which it is a part (including the world and community). Funding the imagination allows for the emergence of aspects of the past that are relevant for now and provides hope for an alternative present. The author writes: through being 'playful with the past,' the 'present is recontextualized' (Brueggemann, 1993: 37). Concerning the future, existence is given over to God. Citing the future as a continual act of recreation in the light of the past, the dynamic relation of the existent self with God avoids completion. No explanation can then be given to the relation with or knowledge of God. The movement inspires a newness of Spirit that in turn inspires a renewed passion for scripture.

In some ways the author's ideas, although not using such terminology, have Kierkegaardian resonance. For example, Brueggemann alludes to the interiority of the single individual as the locus of learning. Each individual's inner life acts as a 'zone of imagination' in which interpretation of the texts takes place (Brueggemann, 1993: 62). Furthermore, the contingency of the individual is recognized: contingent influences here are cited as interests, fears and hurts. It is Brueggemann's contention that these lie 'at the bottom' of one's imagination and thus any authentic Biblical engagement should not be discontinuous with their influence (Brueggemann, 1993: 63).

²⁵⁶ See page 120.

Brueggemann makes reference to the church, family, economics and social ideology in terms of external influences. He posits that these 'competing influences' must be 'lost' in order to gain one's own meanings. He writes: 'subjects themselves must answer for the process of learning' (Brueggemann, 1993: 62). Being fiercely adamant that a postmodern hermeneutic ruptures the control for knowledge held by Western white male hegemony, he likens the rift to the biblical Exile (Brueggemann, 1993: 64) - the social displacement of Israelites from Jerusalem to Babylon - which inspired a renewed theology in the light of memory and hope.²⁵⁷ Other biblical examples of rupture (e.g. Israelites leaving Ur, Egypt and the Wilderness),²⁵⁸ are also cited, suggesting that such rupture opens the way for vulnerability (Brueggemann, 1993: 64). In this hermeneutic, an absolute idea of the Absolute is shattered, so to allow for the work of memory and hope upon the individual. This incites risk and uncertainty.

Ideas reflective of Hegel's self and other relation are also evident. Each as a participant is necessary for learning - the other is in the self as the self is in other. Here self and other equate to both the individual and absolute. As Brueggemann states: 'the impact of otherness cannot always run in one direction' (Brueggemann, 1993: 68). Since the relation of self with absolute other²⁵⁹ enters the drama of the text, each is impacted and changed. And this change has 'cosmic significance' (Brueggemann, 1993: 68) that effects the rupture of self-sufficiency and totality. Brueggemann concedes that this is not necessarily a palatable view within 'traditional theology', but continues to argue that the affirmation of self as other in relation to God is Biblical and therefore should be embraced (Brueggemann, 1993: 68). In summary, Brueggemann describes his hermeneutic as such: 'I suggest that impingement on the zone of imagination is not done in large reductionist summaries' but 'is done one item at a time.' The outcome will be 'a liberating process of imagination' that permits learning 'in the context of this Other who with us traverses the stage and script' (Brueggemann, 1993: 71).

Whilst having striking resonance with earlier material, it might be argued that Brueggemann's hermeneutic is not a movement of 'Bildung as Repetition.' It is rather a liberationist cycle. Here the freedom to interpret a text comes from the partnership of an individual with a subjective and personalised idea of the absolute. Although the author is keen to avoid relativism and reductionism, (Brueggemann, 1993: 66), the existential trajectory of learning

²⁵⁷ Psalm 137.

²⁵⁸ Stories found in the books of Genesis and Exodus.

²⁵⁹ The use of lower case letters here signifies the absolute other as encountered within temporality rather than the absolute Other who opens up the middle space.

that takes place 'with' the other (who is mutually 'in' the self), represents the movement of recollection that has not yet achieved repetition. Since repetition requires the paradoxical breaking through of the Absolute Other into existence, Brueggemann's hermeneutic is like a spinning wheel (Kierkegaard, 2009: 4). Starting with existence and drawing the other to the self on the strength of the past and present, the learner interprets a text accordingly. The text does not represent the interface of self and other; rather the self and other relation, as $A=A$, works upon the text. As such the individual is not confronted by the absolute but reflected in it. Unlike the mobius strip that indicates an interruption in circularity, the movement here is continuous.

However, there is a middle space that is an existential realm. Located within the self, the zone of imagination presents as an area of interiority reminiscent of the womb as cited in Chapter Four. This zone is the host of mutuality. Being part of the circle, the text is not a transitional object. Indeed, it might be argued, akin to the ideas of Gunther-Heimbrock outlined in Chapter Six, that it is the absolute here that is the transitional object. In the light of Hegel's proposition in *Logic*, where the imperative of the self and other relation is mediation (Hegel, 1975: 17), it is the mediate self in other (here named God) that is transformed.

Regarding loss, within the postmodern view, loss pertains to the dissolution of the absolute as Absolute. According to Derrida and Lyotard for example (Smith, 2006: 39; 63), the shattering of both the metanarrative and idea of an absolute Absolute opens up the opportunity for meaning to become local, individual and provisional. Indeed, as argued by Jane Erricker and noted in Chapter One, it is the subjective, changeable 'discursive self' that learns (Erricker and Erricker, 2000: 113). However, in 'Bildung as repetition,' loss does not negate but invites the absolute (Kierkegaard, 1974: 22). As subjectivity's subjectivity, the absolute gives truth to the learner, and both subjectivity and objectivity are lost. The loss inspires a return to contingency. Again, alluding to the Babylonian Exile, following God's people's loss of identity and place, their return to Jerusalem evidenced a new idea of faith gained from the loss. It was in exile that their learning was lived out.

Also in 'Bildung as repetition,' the metanarrative still exists intact. It is a part of the relational shape of self and other with Other. What happens as a result of the rupture or leap is not a loss *of* the metanarrative of the absolute, but the loss *to* the Absolute. The ethical self is lost to the Absolute and on the strength of the absurd, makes a return to the contingent world. With no loss, learning becomes its own totality and is subject to critique. The role of the metanarrative provided by the Biblical parable is explored now, and evaluating representation

in this new perspective of Christian education, it is considered how, as the nexus of self and other, this Biblical 'event' might inspire authentic learning.

7.4 Lost Icons

At this stage of the current thesis, *Lost Icons* by Rowan Williams (Williams, 2000: 5) provides further clarity regarding the new perspective. Visiting familiar themes such as loss (Williams, 2000: 6), tension (Williams, 2000: 7) and brokenness (Williams, 2000: 9), Williams asserts that in learning, a negotiation must take place between the subject and world (Williams, 2000: 5) through cultural icons. History, tradition and culture are all key aspects in his argument and as such, both the metanarrative and cultural contingency are embraced - not overcome. Through the main theme of the book, that is cultural bereavement (Williams, 2000: 6), Williams outlines how the loss of the icon in contemporary culture has reduced the possibility of a dialectical method of meaning-making; thus, it is his conjecture that the icon, which might be considered the condition that allows for learning in the middle space, must be reconsidered.

Williams suggests that such a consideration might serve to provide a 'window into an alien frame of reference that is at the same time the structure that will make definitive sense of the world we inhabit' (Williams, 2000: 2). As such it can become an educational tool. For example, the icon might reflect the Janus-face of repetition that looks forward in the light of the past (Williams, 2000: 144). It might also be an example of the middle space between self and other that prevents self-sufficiency (Williams, 2000: 145). Furthermore, as a transitional object, the icon might allow for the creation and recreation of meaning in the middle space of self and other, and this will be considered more fully towards the end of the current chapter.

In *Lost Icons*, Williams initially critiques liberationist ideology. In so doing he incites freedom as illusory, indicating its role in the loss of corporate responsibility (Williams, 2000: 35). Writing in the context of schooling, he posits choice for example as reflecting indifference to others, and in the reduction of the agent to consumer (Williams, 2000: 36), this involves the influence of 'misplaced dogmatism' (Williams, 2000: 39). For education, asserting that choice is made for and not by learners, this highlights issues of power; Williams identifies that this results in learners becoming subject to the control of others and this he contends, is 'potentially tragic,' (Williams, 2000: 47). In the light of this, he argues for a space in which learners can negotiate the choices that are made on their behalf: 'where gradually the consequences, the self-defining knots of adult choice can be figured, fingered and experimented with' (Williams, 2000: 47). To challenge the forces of choice and control is to take part in formative education

– although not in the von Humboldtian sense – revising the relationship of the self to external influences. This takes place in the middle space.

Williams also criticises self-certainty, arguing that personalisation is a distorted doctrine, and linking illusory identity with violence against the vulnerable (Williams, 2000: 102). Reminiscent of the Hegelian struggle, he highlights the mastery attained when an interior consciousness is liberated from relation. He also notes the dangers of self-reclamation, citing the political regimes of Germany in the 1940s and South Africa in 1991, as examples. He argues that without other, one can absolve oneself and thus wield the same power one seeks to overcome (Williams, 2000: 103-4). A learner must relinquish his or her identity to the other so that he or she might not 'lose moral substance and refuse the work of historical thought' (Williams, 2000: 111). This again is a familiar point.

Not dissimilar to the conjecture of Kierkegaard, Williams proposes that learners recognise how the significance of an experience of 'now' is borne by the past that they can relate to. This is recollection. However, the past is also changed in the light of 'now.' The movement forward is a continual re-telling of self in the light of knowledge of the past (Williams, 2000: 144) and this is repetition. As such, any representation of the telling is always partial, thus transitional. Furthermore, to prevent the circularity critiqued above, there requires a conflict. Citing Hegel's *Unhappy Consciousness*, Williams explains that there should be no fixed position for the self, nor should the self be considered an item (or object). Indeed, he argues that learning without 'friction' is an enemy of the self (Williams, 2000: 147). It is only through tension that the self can be developed (Williams, 2000: 146), resonating with Gillian Rose's assertion that the leap from self-certainty is the most 'undangerous' position (Rose, 1992: 159), and the idea in the current thesis that authentic learning arises through difficulty.²⁶⁰

For education then, it is in critical reflection that the self can move forward. This involves the negotiation, not the resolution, of the conflict of ideality and reality. Williams posits that it is the recognition of the significance of tension that is the essence of self - development and writes: 'I can only be where I truly am by recognising that there is no fixed place where I am alone and incorrupt' (Williams, 2000: 145). Here the learning self is always in question. The

²⁶⁰ See pages 171-2.

imperative is the individual thinking about thinking, checking against uncritical expressions of 'reality' so to provide material for a telling and retelling of the self (Williams, 2000: 145-7).²⁶¹

Equally, doctrine is warned against fixedness. Alluding to traditional forms of religious language and rhetoric, it is Williams' assertion that historical meanings and values cannot be replicated in a contemporary context. To be meaningful, doctrines must consider the context and narrative of the self that they are being addressed to (Williams, 2000: 149). However, their relation with context is not dialogic: this would only incite mutual recognition and illusion. What is required is a dialectical relation which invokes the presence of a non-existent Other, through whom brokenness and incompleteness are revealed and old meanings are given new life (Williams, 2000: 152).

As identified in Chapter Two, when 'I' reflects back into its self, it becomes its own certainty and misrecognises its own (illusory) truth (Hegel, 1977: 104). For Williams however, the learning individual is a critical self that refuses to explain truth subjectively and cover up the tension that comes from the relation of the Unhappy Consciousness. This self learns to live with contradiction. It is proposed that the education of the single individual takes place within the relation of relation in Absolute relation.

This then has implications for representation. When other is contingent, representation becomes subjective, the result of which might be the bid for power and subjective gain, impacting identity and behaviour and reinforcing hierarchical views. Williams highlights the dangers of contingent religious language, not least the projection and construction of an image of Other. This he incites as the potentiality for misunderstanding (Williams, 2000: 180), violence against other, and the wielding of power. In his rhetoric, this is religious corruption (Williams, 2000: 162). Because in contradiction the 'non-existent Other' is both absent and different to self, it cannot be depicted finitely. This then requires a letting go of fixed forms of representation.

In practical terms, this is challenging. For instance, Bible stories located within the Judeo-Christian tradition encourage certain cultural and religious interpretations; therefore, it is difficult to engage with these stories without resorting to inherited language and

²⁶¹ This idea is explored more fully in the published article: Wills, R., (2014), 'Challenging 'the they': an Heideggerian reflection on the impact of power figures in children's spiritual lives' in *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 19, no 3-4, pp. 187-196.

representations of God. Nevertheless, again akin to proposals in the current thesis, Williams posits that representation should not be surrendered totally; rather, the fixed truths that result from representation must be surrendered. It is this relinquishing that provides the condition for the breakthrough of the Other who is non-contingent, and the revelation of the moment of learning that unveils learning's learning as truth.

The condition, which provides the locus of learning, ruptures any theology, models or methods that the individual (be it the learner or teacher) might lay claim to. Williams names this condition the 'soul' (Williams, 2000: 160). Here the presence of 'I' is recognised only in relation to the other who is in relation with Other. Being clear that the rupture is not an example of anarchy, soul represents a relation of grace. There is no space in the soul for power or violence against other; neither is there space for the desires of the 'I'. There is no finality or fulfilment. Rather the soul accepts knowing as not knowing and in the 'suspension of gratification,' invites the 'non-existent Other' (Williams, 2000: 75-6; 79) who is revealed (not represented) within (Williams, 2000: 160).

As a tangible illustration of this, and for Christian formation, Williams revisits the role of the icon. He posits that it is out of the tension between one's experience of the Absolute and the refusal of fixed representations, that the Christian icon emerges (Williams, 2000: 184). In this context, he writes about the iconography of Eighth Century Eastern Christianity as a tool for Christian learning. Never viewed in profile, the characters (and scenes) depicted in the icons are not intended to be representations, but rather point the individual in a direction towards new perceptions (Williams, 2000: 184). As the nexus of self and other, Williams proposes that these images invoke a surrender to the absent Other who illuminates the self and other relation, to provide new meanings.

Letting go of preconceived ideas of the subject matter, the learning individual relinquishes the idea that the icon is a 'motionless phenomenon.' Instead, the movement of the eye towards the source or centre of the image, allows the image in turn to 'bear down' upon the individual (Williams, 2000: 185), to allow for self-examination and critical reflection. The icon acts as a window to the non-contingent world and in the condition provided by the movement between the individual with the icon, the Other confronts the relation so to inspire a revisiting and retelling of contingent and inherited 'truth.'

Returning to the task of this thesis, it might be argued that Williams' idea of the icon provides an apposite illustration for the role of the Christian symbol (story or parable) in 'Bildung as

repetition.’ The icon provides the interface of self and other which is the condition for the moment of learning, and as a window whose view is dual-directional, inspires a glimpse of the face of the Other. It furthermore inspires recognition of the paradox that the absolute indeed might give the truth. As the inspiration for the loss of self to the (Absolute) Other, the icon establishes the unequal triadic relation of subjectivity’s subjectivity that ruptures mutuality and in turn opens up the aporia in the middle space.

As a transitional object, the icon inspires meaning-making that is shaped in the outworking of the relation of relations. This is an educational process that involves both self and other in a movement of interplay for the transformation of each. However, also invoking a transcendent dimension, the icon inspires the condition in which the learning individual is able to critically reflect on the interplay. This inspires the failure of mutual recognition (Rose, 1996: 75) that is the beginning of spiritual learning. This failure allows for new ideas and meanings regarding the images to be established in the middle space, as well as the creation of new images and impressions. Some practical examples of this have been outlined recently (Wills, 2015).²⁶²

As the role of the educator has featured in the current thesis, it is necessary here to note that in ‘Bildung as repetition,’ the educator must protect the middle space; this space should not be the condition for the truth *of* Being in which the outcome is self-sufficiency, but the condition in which new ideas are negotiated in the light of Being *and* the non-existent Other. Repetition of course is an essential factor in this new perspective. The role of the educator here is to encourage recognition of the rupture as the condition in which to negotiate and

²⁶² These examples form part of the conference paper ‘Bildung – a spiritual learning tool?’ presented by Ruth Wills at the *International Conference on Children’s Spirituality* (Lincoln, July 2016). For instance, in a Music lesson, the icon, represented by the Civil rights song ‘Oh Freedom,’ inspired creative and emotional reflection amongst a group of children. In the movement of interplay, the learners engaged with the meaning of the song as they sang. Drawing on previous learning about Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King’s march to Selma, and more pertinent examples of oppression such as the current treatment of refugees in Europe, they could recollect; in the middle space created by the action of singing, they were able to reflect on their recollection and revise their impressions regarding previous learning to create new and authentic meanings (repetition). In response one child began to cry and stated that we should never let oppression happen in this way again. Another child asked the existential question of why oppression exists, and another asked what can be done to help those who suffer. One child led the way in providing an answer to the questions and suggested that the whole class should begin by talking to people at home about identity, encouraging them to accept all peoples, regardless of difference. Whilst the icon in this example is not necessarily a Christian symbol, it might be suggested that it illustrates ‘Bildung as repetition’ in practice and so is relevant to the current thesis. The song as the icon reflects the Janus-face of repetition that looks forward in the light of the past (Williams, 2000: 144).

understand differently the nature of the self and inherited truth in the light of the Absolute, and from this new understanding, consider what it means to live a life of faith.

Faith no longer concerns the adoption of fixed ideas and values. As the Janus-face, the icon allows the learning individual to re-evaluate the images of the Christian tradition in the light of his or her contingency. In the triune relation, the presence (or breakthrough) of the paradoxical non-existent Other allows for new meanings to be illuminated. These meanings transform both the learning individual and the tradition in which the learning takes place. As stated previously, when the contingent single individual is transformed by the truth given through the Absolute paradox, he or she able to live out his or her learning in this light and this is the life of faith.

As suggested by both Williams (Williams, 2000: 91) and Mortensen (Mortensen, 2003: 136), it might be proposed that the parable as a transitional object and icon might serve as a learning tool within the middle space. As a literary genre, the parable might take a number of forms – Aesop’s Fables and some fairy tales for instance. However, in the context of the current thesis, it is the Biblical parable that is considered here, and its role in ‘Bildung as repetition’ is outlined.

7.5 The Parable

The proposition of the parable as a learning tool serves here to provide an example of how ‘Bildung as repetition’ might be applied in practice. Being a perspective rather than model, ‘Bildung as Repetition’ has no particular agenda. However, as a means by which educators and learners might be able to reconsider learning, it acknowledges the contingent life of the learner without denying the Christian tradition of which it is a part, and allows for the creativity that inspires meaning-making. Representing the window that ensures the interplay of self and other, and as the Janus-face that inspires repetition, the parable invites the third partner in learning, that is Spirit.

Rarely providing any meaning regarding his telling of the parables, Christ encouraged his hearers to create their own meanings. Locating the stories in the world of his followers (several parables include sheep, vineyards, journeys and employment), he allowed them, in the light of interplay with the stories, to reflect and so inspire meanings that were relevant to them. Spirit, as the third partner in the learning triad, allowed for creative reflection. Similarly, the parable today might also provide an example of the icon that inspires repetition and allows learners to reflect on meaning making in order to afford authenticity in faith.

When learners hear or read a parable or Bible story in its entirety and original form, creative interplay (in the form of artistic activity, or just listening in silence), allows them to reflect on what it might mean for them. In recollection, learners draw on their own experience or knowledge of the situations of the main characters, as well as their prior understanding of Christ and his ministry. Reflecting on their reflections, Spirit as the teacher, or Absolute, allows the learners to revise what has previously been taught, and in repeating forward, create new understandings of the parables that are personal yet still remain within the context of 'The Christian Faith.'

These reflections can never be subjective or total since in this perspective, the Absolute intervenes. It is the learner's reflection on the parable on the strength of the leap of faith to the Absolute (or unknowing) that allows for authenticity in learning and it is suggested, the life of faith. The parable therefore, provides an example of the 'event' that inspires the moment of learning in authentic education, and as the image that opens up the middle space of reflection, it acts as a transitional object that inspires the vital relation of relations. The next and final short section, summarises how 'Bildung as repetition,' including the parable as the icon for learning, might represent the new perspective of Christian education that the current thesis requires, and provides conclusions that might be noted for practice.

7.6 Proposing a new perspective

In this concluding section, it is noted how the proposed new perspective of Christian education, described in this thesis as 'Bildung as repetition,' reimagines relation and recognises a new relational shape, that is the dialectic of Bildung and repetition. Rather than positing self and other as opposites (illustrated variously as the learner and teacher, learning and the learner, the tradition and the individual, and the learner and God), as presented in the Literature Review and early chapters, the relation in the new perspective is authentic to both self and other. The triune relation of relations highlights the inadequacy of paradigms, models and methods when considered in themselves, and renegotiates how fixed representations of God or truth for example, are perceived, understood and learnt.

'Bildung as repetition' considers illusion as a pedagogical tool. Recognising the illusory nature of self-sufficiency, including the dualistic mutual recognition, it highlights the illusion of both objective and subjective teaching; to that end, it transcends ideality and reality. However, as the dialectical relation of the illusion of illusions, this new perspective allows learners to renegotiate what is illusory, reflecting on such learning in the light of their own contingency, and moving forward into new experiences and understandings. It might be suggested that

‘Bildung as repetition’ is the means by which the self-certain nature of the paradigms presented at the outset, as well as their dichotomous positing, is ruptured, so to inspire a new way of teaching and learning that as aporia, is uncertain.

Having no telos other than its own meaning, this new perspective embraces the unknown. The outcomes cannot be pre-determined or even hoped for. The teacher provides and protects the condition that is the middle space, in which Spirit inspires and informs; yet, as what is learnt or understood results from the creative interplay of the learner and the ‘icon’ in relation to the Absolute, Spirit cannot be defined or claimed. As dynamic learning, it changes and evolves, allowing the learner to revisit and revise what is understood through learning as life continues.

The contingent life of the learner is significant in this perspective, as is the Christian tradition within which learning takes place. To that end, in the creative interplay between the learner and the ‘icon,’ mediation plays an important role. Mediation, as explained in Chapter Two, ensures that the truth of learning can never be grasped or re-presented as truth. Mediation also represents the middle space between self and other that ensures that learning is not linear, progressing towards a fixed goal, but a broken cycle that affects surrender, loss and return. Loss involves the leap of faith, that surrendering immediacy and totality, invites the unknown. Yet, recognised as the Absolute, it is on the strength of an encounter with this unknown Other that learning has meaning and might be considered authentic.

The leap of faith invites the intervention of the Absolute. This takes place in the ‘moment’ in which, albeit a paradox, the Absolute enters temporality. Illustrated by the incarnation of Christ, this intervention might in contemporary terms be represented by the Christian icon, or parable. As the paradox, also represented by a Janus-face that looks both forwards and back, the parable presents the words of Christ, and so introduces his life and teachings to learners today. However, as a teacher in the parables, he holds back. He does not provide any meaning but rather allows his followers to make their own responses. As in the allegory provided in Revelation 3:12, he stands at the door of his learners’ lives, but waits for them to allow him to intervene.²⁶³

When choosing to choose and being willing to learn learning, the learning individual allows the words of Christ to intervene in his or her own life. In the middle space between the learner and the story, the Absolute, as Spirit, allows for creative reflection that in turn inspires

²⁶³ Revelation 3 vs 20; New International Version. ‘Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.’

transformation. This, it is suggested, is the crux of authentic learning. When engagement with Christ's words in the parable, Bible story or Christian symbol allows for reflection on reflection and this is transferred back to the contingent life of the learner, Christian education has ongoing meaning and so inspires an authentic life of faith.

7.7 Conclusion

In conclusion to this discussion, it is necessary now to highlight the wider context for the implementation of 'Bildung as repetition.'²⁶⁴ As already stated, it proposed that this new perspective might encourage practitioners to reconsider teaching and learning for an authentic life of faith. This conclusion considers how this might occur in the workplace, for the development of authentic learning and unconditional educational experiences.

Having identified at the outset that the inspiration for this thesis arose from philosophical reflection on practice within a Christian mission organisation, the conclusions presented above primarily concern a church context. Again, as already indicated at the outset, the new perspective does not form a new position or propose a new methodology. Neither is it restricted to education with children. Rather it is suggested that 'Bildung as repetition' might encourage practitioners to reconsider how learners learn, recognise the significance of the relationship of learning and the learner with the Absolute, and embrace the risk and uncertainty that comes with suspending fixed ideas for the inspiration of new thinking.

When one considers education in the light of this new perspective, the relationship between the learner and teacher must also be reconsidered. The unequal triadic educational shape allows for each to be the learner, as the Absolute interrupts certainty and inspires new understandings. The 'one degree shift' that educators might make, therefore requires that claims to authority and dogma might be suspended. The condition that opens up the possibility for learning in the middle space thus allows education to be personal yet remain within the realm of Christianity, whilst the icon provides the window through which the individual might grasp a personal glimpse of the Absolute.

In the thesis, the illustration of the parable in the Biblical gospels serves as an example of how both uncertainty and the loss of fixed meaning invites the opportunity for individuals to consider the words of Christ for themselves. The parable is the icon that is the Janus-face between the individual and the Absolute. However, in considering the practical application of

²⁶⁴ Noted as a provisional working title, this phrase is not to be taken forward to practice; as the current thesis is theoretical, it will remain as such here.

‘Bildung as repetition,’ it is important to note that the icon as an educational tool need not be limited to the parable. As indicated by Mortensen and Williams above,²⁶⁵ other literary styles might form the transitional objects that represent the inspiration for learning in the middle space. In a Christian context, the icon might be illustrated in terms of other Biblical texts, symbols, liturgy and even sacraments. The key issue here is not the nature of icons as such, but how educators embrace their provisionality, allowing for the interruption of any prior claims to their meaning or representations as fixed truths.

From a practical perspective, it is suggested that educators might reconsider the role of the icon in learning. For many in church contexts, pre-published curricula and teaching outlines present a platform of ideas for engagement with a Bible passage.²⁶⁶ The passage often serves to teach a pre-determined object lesson that reinforces a certain Christian truth. In the new perspective however, when considering the text as an icon and suspending any claims to pre-determined objectives, as well as allowing the interplay of the contingent individual with the Bible text in creative ways, ‘Bildung as repetition’ might allow learners to identify and construct meanings that are authentic to their own life experience *and* their understanding of Christianity. Neither the curriculum outlines nor Bible passage are rejected; yet by applying a new perspective to how learners experience the Bible, Christian education that has meaning for their own personal lives is inspired.

Considering the implication of the new perspective for a wider context of Christian education, it might be suggested that the ideas proposed here are also applicable to school-based learning. According to Government-led inspection criteria, all schools must currently provide evidence of a spiritual dimension to learning. This means that spirituality must be embedded throughout all curriculum areas and considered integral to the holistic experience of school life (Ofsted, 2015:35-6). Additionally, under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act,²⁶⁷ all Church schools are inspected on their provision for Religious Education. Catholic schools are encouraged to follow set curricula²⁶⁸ and all children must engage in daily acts of collective worship.

²⁶⁵ See pages 143 and 190.

²⁶⁶ Examples of curricula include *Light*, published by Scripture Union (www.scriptureunion.org.uk/Light accessed 31/01/17) and *Roots*, published by Roots Ecumenical Partnership (www.rootsontheweb.com accessed 31/01/17).

²⁶⁷ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/section/48> accessed 31/01/17. See also *Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools* (SIAMS) handbook, 2017).

²⁶⁸ www.comeandseere.co.uk accessed 31/01/17.

Considering the curriculum as an icon, it is possible to apply the premise of 'Bildung as repetition' to Religious Education in schools as well as in church. Not negating the set teaching, again educators might be encouraged to make the 'one degree shift' away from teaching with certainty, to allow the space for children and adults in the learning environment to personally reconsider the meaning of what is presented in the light of their own experience. In the middle space between the curriculum and the individual, learning as Spirit can inspire a new understanding of Christian doctrine, with the potential for a renewed experience of the Christian faith to be made manifest. Representing a dialectical relationship between the spirituality agenda in schools, which promotes 'a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them, including the intangible' and a 'willingness to reflect on their experiences' (Ofsted, 2015: 35), and the nationally agreed syllabus for Religious Education, the new perspective provides the opportunity for learners to draw on their own existence in learning, yet without minimising the influence of the Christian tradition within which it is located.

It must be acknowledged that in the current school-based educational climate, there is little space or time for teachers to reflect on how children learn or indeed reconsider their own perspective on learning. When inspections, targets and learning objectives direct practice in the classroom and when even the spiritual development of learners must be evidenced, the consideration that educators might rethink teaching and learning is certainly not a priority. Additionally, presented as a perspective and not a model, it is acknowledged that the thesis proposed here is not easy to put into practice. Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that in church-based education, which is mostly served by volunteers, and in a climate where the training of potential church leaders in Christian education is at an all-time low, little reflection on practice takes place. This means that popular models and methods such as Godly Play²⁶⁹ and Messy Church²⁷⁰ are adopted by church leaders without much consideration of how these may or may not contribute to an authentic life of faith.

Therefore, the intention of this thesis is to allow church and school - based educators, leaders and policy makers to think again about learning for faith. From a personal point of view, the conclusions presented here have influenced practice at a local level in terms of children's work in church and school; 'Bildung as repetition' has had an impact on colleagues and it has also been possible to experience the transformative nature of learning. For the new

²⁶⁹ See page 41.

²⁷⁰ See page 77.

perspective to have wider impact however, it needs to come to the attention of leaders in schools and churches, as well as those who train teachers and Christian ministers. To that end, knowledge exchange in the public arena is essential.

Proposed outcomes involve the presentation of theory at academic conferences and the submission of a paper to a relevant education journal. Outside of the academic arena, a proposal for a 'Grove Booklet,'²⁷¹ training sessions for church and school leaders and the opportunity to write via social media will all facilitate the dissemination of ideas. Finally, drawing on existing networks and contacts within the realms of church and school-based Christian education, it will be possible to present the new perspective to policy makers and those who develop curriculum. Consultation meetings will enable such partners to consider the value and implication of 'Bildung as repetition,' with a view to influencing the way in which educators access pre-published curricula and teaching outlines.

The time-scale for implementing the proposed outcomes is long-term. In promoting the new perspective, it is likely that assurance must be given to leaders and educators that it does not serve to undermine Christianity, nor indeed personal spirituality. It will be also important to note that whilst it is a new perspective, it does not either undermine or eschew established methods, models or beliefs; rather it encourages teachers and learners to reconsider their relationship with such methods, models and beliefs, in relation to the Absolute. In this case, it is suggested that in adopting the proposed 'one degree shift,' Christian learning in church and school might become more authentic, relevant to individual's lives and thus, contribute to a long-lasting life of faith.

²⁷¹ www.grovebooks.co.uk accessed 31/01/17.

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